

# THE PEACHAM PATRIOT

PEACHAM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

## PHA's Summer Programs 2022 Inspired A Strong Public Response

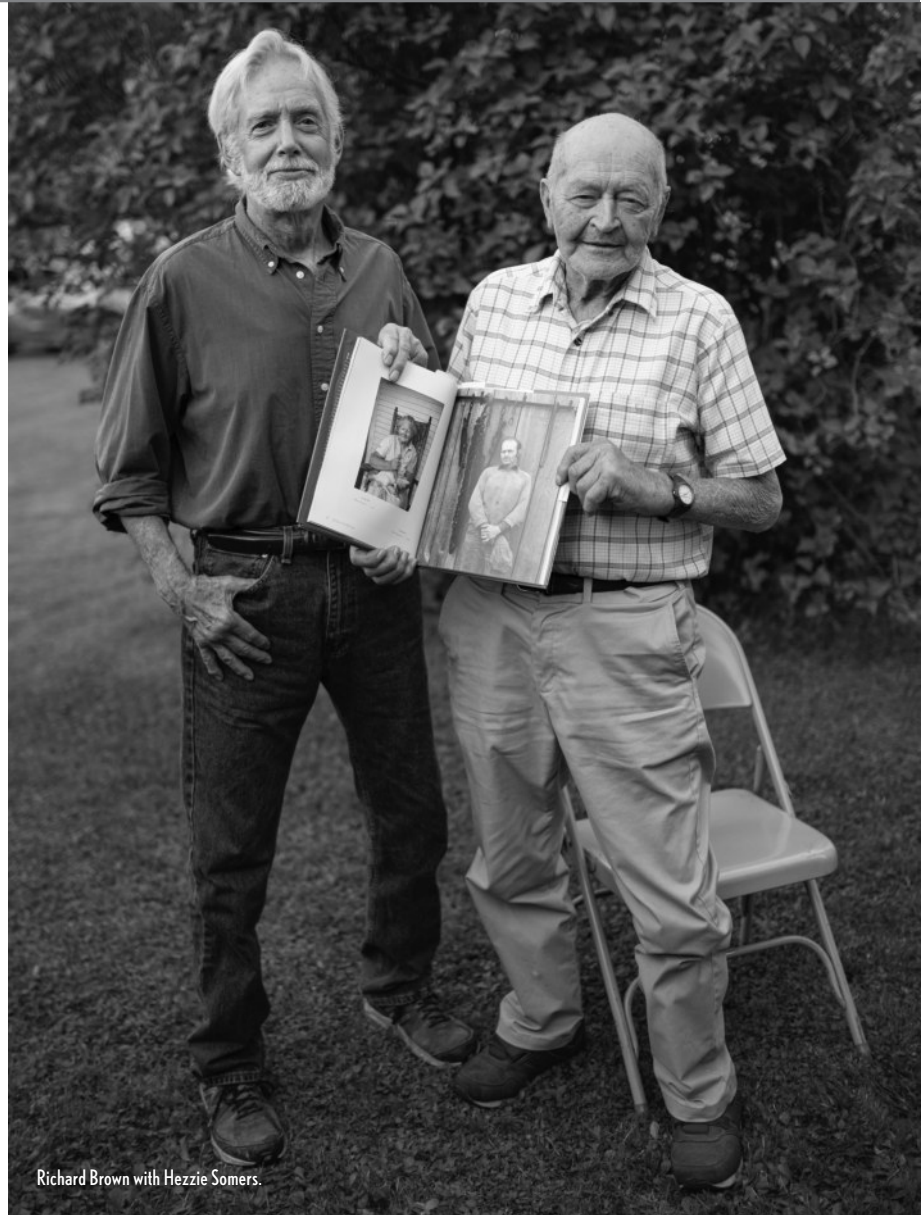
PHA's summer 2022 programming focused on Peacham artists and designers.

After a delay of two years due to the COVID pandemic, photographs from Richard W. Brown's latest book, *The Last of the Hill Farms* (David Godine, 2018) were presented in the Historical House Annual Exhibition. As usual, the exhibition opened on July 4 and closed after Fall Foliage Day.

PHA's Annual Meeting program, *Designer and Photographer: Making Books Together*, offered the opportunity to learn how *The Last of the Hill Farms* was created through a conversation, moderated by Johanna Branson, between Brown, the photographer, and Susan McClellan, Brown's wife and *Hill Farm's* designer. The meeting was held outside the Historical House in front of the Lorna Quimby Garden on a lovely August evening. (A drawing for an historical pie donated by Ellie Blachly following the program.)

*Hill Farms* shows a vanishing way of life on the small family farms that were still prevalent when Brown moved to Peacham in 1971. The people and landscapes in these pictures evoke memories of a time when Peacham was still predominantly agrarian, a time when it hung in the balance between tradition and change.

Many people still remember the scenes and people in the *Hill Farm* photographs, and both the exhibition and the Annual Meeting inspired a strong public response. A particularly poignant moment took place at the Annual Meeting when Hezzie Somers posed, with Richard and the 1974 photograph



Richard Brown with Hezzie Somers.

of Hezzie included in *Hill Farms*, for a reunion photograph. The photographs of Hezzie and his parents are among the most enduringly popular of those displayed in *Hill Farms*. Hezzie passed away not long after the meeting; we are grateful that the exhibition and meeting triggered this reunion and that we had this special time with Hezzie. We are also grateful that Jock Gill captured a memorable image (above) of the reunion.

PHA and the Peacham Library cooperated once again on the Summer Series, an annual program open to the public. Three events, all related to the theme of Peacham artists and designers, were held. The first was *Threads of an Artistic Life*, by Dean Bornstein, the second was *A Conversation with Josette Lyders*, held on the occasion of the exhibition and benefit sale of works by her father,

(continued on page 2)

## PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS

First, many thanks to all who contributed to PHA's success in 2022. We are particularly grateful to Richard Brown and Susan McClellan, whose exhibit, *The Last of the Hill Farms*, brought many visitors to the Historical House. Some had stories and personal recollections triggered by Richard's photographs. Everyone who visited enjoyed this evocative look at Peacham's farming history. We are also grateful to Gary Newman, who opened his beautiful Village home for annual Wine and Cheese fundraiser, and to the many members who donated time, money, or both to PHA. PHA could not succeed without your support, and we are grateful.

This year's summer exhibit, titled *Rags and Riches*, will offer a look at Peacham's social and work life during the 1800s and early 1900s through clothing and textiles from the PHA collection. You'll have the chance to see every day work clothes and finery worn by Peacham's more affluent residents. Many items were made by hand, and some of the fabrics were home spun. Others were made by professional tailors or were the product of early manufacturing. Put them all together, and you have a remarkable picture of how Peachamites dressed. We think you'll enjoy it.

We're planning to offer some "on the lawn and under the tent" events related to the exhibit. You'll be able to see the processes of spinning, felting, and other aspects of clothing manufacture. We're also planning to offer games and other activities in which Peachamites young and old engaged while wearing clothing like that in the exhibit.

Work continues on the second edition of *Historic Homes of Peacham*. We hope to have this updated volume available by the fall. Please check the PHA website, [www.peachamhistorical.org](http://www.peachamhistorical.org), for updates and additional activities.

I look forward to seeing you this summer!

STEVE GALINAT, *PHA President*

**PHA needs mannequins and dress forms for the summer exhibit. Please contact Susan Chandler if you have any to lend. Thank you!**

*(Hill Farms continued from page 1)*

Joseph M. Smogenski, and the third was the PHA Annual Meeting program described above.

Peacham is blessed by the philanthropy of its citizens. Josette Lyders donated paintings and works on paper made by her father to a sale benefitting the Peacham Library, Richard Brown held a sale of prints displayed in the summer exhibition to benefit the Peacham Historical Society. Both organizations benefitted substantially. We are grateful!

JOHANNA BRANSON

## New to the PHA Collection: A Most Unusual Gift

In June, 2022, the president of the Westford (MA) Historical Association called PHA to offer a small item related to Peacham's history. PHA accepted the gift, and Board member Johanna Branson collected it while returning home from a Massachusetts trip.

The gift was an early canning jar containing maple sugar made in 1835. On the front of the jar is a handwritten label, which states:

*Maple Sugar Made by Mr. John Darling of Wheelock Vermont the year 1835*

*Presented to Mrs. Harris Lynds By Mrs. Abigail Brown of So Peacham in the year 1858*

The jar is in remarkably good condition, and the contents are still (somewhat) recognizable as a food product, despite being 188 years old.

The jar and its contents presented PHA with several mysteries: Why was the maple sugar given to the individuals listed? What was the connection between the individuals named on the jar label? How and why did the jar end up in a Massachusetts museum collection? It took a lot of digging to find any information related to these questions, and we still cannot fully answer any of them.

The jar's label states that John Darling, of Wheelock, Vermont, made the maple sugar. John was the tenth of fifteen children born to Moses Darling. Government pension records establish that Moses was a veteran of the Revolutionary War, and early U.S. Census records show him as living in Hopkinton and Canterbury, New Hampshire. before moving to Wheelock at an unknown date. Moses is described as a farmer in both genealogical and Census records. Wheelock land and livestock records suggest that he was quite poor.

John Darling was born in New Hampshire on March 26, 1796. He moved to Wheelock with his parents. Census records show that John and an older

male sibling remained in Wheelock and farmed there. John died in Wheelock on February 25, 1836, at age 39. He is buried in the South Wheelock cemetery; his gravestone is the only source of death information for John.

Although John lived in Wheelock throughout his adult life, John's uncle (also named John Darling) settled in Groton and several of John's siblings moved from Wheelock to Groton. Another brother moved to Danville. There seems to have been regular contact between the Wheelock Darlings and those in the Peacham area. John was also married in Peacham; in 1828, the Danville North Star announced that John "was united in marriage to Miss Raura Walker in Peacham on April 1st."<sup>1</sup> To date, no records have been found for Raura (possibly Laura) Walker.

These family connections mirrored long-standing community ties between Wheelock and Peacham. According to a 19th-century history of Wheelock, "in the 1790s, there were only a few families in Wheelock, and they were obliged to go to Peacham to mill and buy goods."<sup>2</sup>

The jar's label states that the first recipient of the Darling maple sugar was "Mrs. Abigail Brown." According to People of Peacham, Abigail was born to Samuel and Betsy Carter in 1794, in Canterbury, New Hampshire. It is possible that the Carter and Darling families were connected in Canterbury; John Darling's brother Mesiah married Sarah Carter. There are no records relating to Abigail's early life, but genealogical records show that she became "Mrs. Abigail Hill" and lived in Lyndonville. Peacham town records show that Abigail became the second wife of Abraham Brown, Esquire; Brown married "Mrs. Abigail Carter Hill" in 1845 after the death of his first wife, Judith Carter, of Barnet. Abigail died in 1865. It is possible that she is buried in the Peacham Cemetery; there is a gravestone for Abigail Darling Brown, aged 71. Mrs. Abigail Brown was 71 at her death, but both the birth and death dates have worn off the gravestone, and I could find no record of Abigail marrying a Darling before her marriage Brown.

Abigail gave the jar and its contents to "Mrs. Harris Lynds of South Peacham" in 1858. Harris Lynds, originally from Nova Scotia, was a Peacham blacksmith and farmer. His wife, Eliza J. Walker, was born in Freeman, Maine, in 1825. They had two sons, one born in Dorchester, Massachusetts, and the other in Peacham. The family moved between Dorchester and Peacham for many years before permanently relocating to Massachusetts sometime between 1888 and 1900.

There are no records that explain either why Brown gave the jar to Lynds or if they were related. We do know that the jar moved to Massachusetts with the Lynds family. It also seems likely that the jar had sentimental value. It was given as a present, and the Lynds family kept it. Perhaps the maple sugar was given in remembrance of John Darling or to express a family tie. We will probably never know.

The Westford Museum records do not show who donated the jar or when the donation took place. But Eliza Lynds' granddaughter, Jane Letitia, died in the Westford area in 1942. Perhaps Jane Letitia's heirs donated the jar to the Museum after her death. Perhaps the gift was made later.



Early canning jar containing maple sugar made in 1835.

The aqua-colored canning jar with a screw-top lid is itself a mystery. We know that the sugar was moved to the jar long after Darling made it; The screw-top canning jar was not invented until 1858, the year the gift from Brown to Lynds was made – and more than twenty years after Darling made the maple sugar. Unlike most other canning jars of the period, this one is unmarked so it is impossible to ascertain how Brown acquired it or why she used it for the gift.

The jar will be kept in the Historical House over the summer. We invite you to stop by to see this unusual addition to PHA's collection. The contents of the jar have, over the years, solidified in dark, oxidized layers that vaguely resemble hard chocolate frosting. We don't think you'll want to eat it, but you'll enjoy looking at this interesting bit of Peacham history.

SUSAN CHANDLER

1 [www.nekg.com](http://www.nekg.com). Online catalog of marriage and death announcements taken from *The Danville North Star* newspaper.

2 Child, Hamilton. *Gazetteer of Caledonia and Essex Counties*, The Syracuse Journal Printers, 1887, pp. 381-388.

#### General Sources:

Bogart, Ernest. *Peacham, The Story of a Vermont Hill Town* (Peacham Historical Association, 1981).

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Peacham, Wheelock and Groton Census Data

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## The John Walker Family: Peacham's Mormon Pioneers

The lives of many early Peacham residents are well documented in Ernest Bogart's *Peacham: The Story of a Vermont Hill Town*, but Mormon pioneer John Walker and his family seem to have left no local records except a terse 1832 Peacham Congregational Church entry: "No.238 John Walker Has become a Mormon." However, Census and genealogical records provide considerable information about the Walker family.<sup>1</sup>

John Walker, the fourth child of Simeon and Mary Miner Walker, was born in Peacham on June 20, 1794. Simeon, a Revolutionary War veteran, moved to Peacham in 1780 and bought a 100-acre lot below Jonathan Elkin's land. Around 1798, he built a house, where John grew up with his nine siblings.

In 1819, John married Lydia Holmes in Peacham. Like Simeon and Mary, John and Lydia had ten children. During 1827-1829, the family briefly lived in Cabot, and their fifth child was born there in 1829. But, by 1830, the family had returned to Peacham.

In the spring of 1832, John learned of a new religion, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, popularly called Mormonism. Joseph Smith, the new religion's Vermont-born founder, formally established the Church on April 6, 1830, around the time he published the Book of Mormon. Smith announced that the Book of Mormon's text came from gold plates he had received from an angel named Moroni and claimed that the events described in the Book were a complement to the Bible.

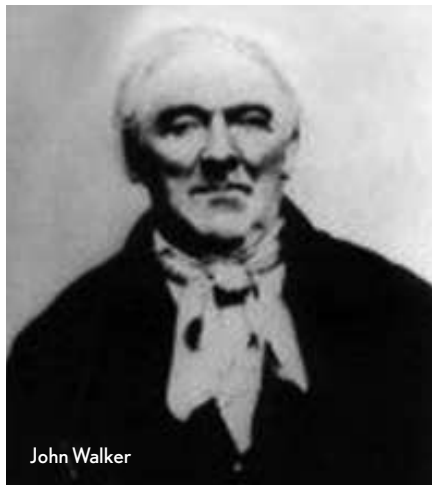
The Mormon Church was founded in upstate New York during the Second Great Awakening, a period of intense religious fervor. Although controversial, the new religion spread rapidly, and the first Vermont branch was organized in Rutland County in 1831. There is no record of Mormon missionaries in Peacham during this period, and the roots of John Walker's conversion cannot be traced. Until Walker's conversion, the family were members of the Congregational Church. Lydia did not initially

approve of her husband's decision to join the Mormons. For the next two years, John worked for a manufacturing establishment in Stanstead Plains, Canada, while Lydia and the children continued to live in Peacham. John came home for periodic visits.

In 1834, Lydia joined the Mormon Church, and John returned from Canada. The family moved to Ogdensburg, New York, where they became members of a local Mormon branch. The four oldest children – William, Lorin, Catherine, and Lucy – were baptized in 1835.

By this time, the headquarters of the Mormon Church had moved to Ohio and Missouri, and Smith encouraged his followers to emigrate to these areas. In the spring of 1838, the Walker family, with eight others, left for western Missouri. By October, they reached the Mormon settlement at Haun's Mill, Missouri. They camped about five miles below the village. At that time, about 20 Mormon families lived near the mill and about 70 lived in the surrounding area.

It was a bad time for a Mormon to move to Missouri. There had already been several incidents of armed conflict between local Missourians and the new Mormon settlers. The conflict intensified after Missouri's governor issued an order that "Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State..." On the night of October 30, 1838, a large group of vigilantes attacked the Mormon settlers in the village. Nineteen men and boys died. Many others, including John Walker, were wounded. John escaped and, after two weeks, reunited with his family and



John Walker

moved to a log cabin in Far West, Missouri. In April 1839, the family moved to a new Mormon settlement in Quincy, Illinois, where John rented a farm and also worked as a carpenter.

While the family lived in Quincy, the Prophet Joseph Smith called John to serve as a missionary in the midwestern states. John served for approximately a year, then returned to his family in the spring of 1840. About a year later, the family moved to Nauvoo, Illinois, which had become the new center of the Mormon community.

During the summer of 1841, Lydia fell ill, and her health worsened during the fall and winter. On January 18, 1842, she died at age 41. Lydia's death had a devastating impact on the family. Joseph Smith asked John to undertake a two-year mission to help him overcome his grief. He also offered to provide a home for the four oldest Walker children. The elder sons, William and Lorin, were already employed by Smith. Together with their sisters, Catherine and Lucy, they moved into the home of Smith and his wife, Emma.

In the spring of 1843, around the time that polygamy was established as an official Church doctrine, the Prophet sought Lucy's hand in marriage. Smith acknowledged that such a marriage would not be recognized outside the Church. Many years later, Lucy recounted her reaction to Smith's proposal:

*My astonishment knew no bounds. . . . "What have you to say?" he asked. "Nothing." How could I speak, or what could I say? He said, "If you will pray sincerely for light and understanding in relation thereto, you shall receive a testimony of the correctness of this principle. I thought I prayed sincerely, but was so unwilling to consider the matter favorably that I fear I did not ask in faith for light. . . . I was tempted and tortured beyond endurance until life was not desirable. Oh that the grave would kindly receive me, that I might find rest on the bosom of my dear mother.*

*The Prophet . . . saw how unhappy I was, and sought an opportunity of again speaking to me on this subject, and said: "Although I cannot, under existing circumstances,*

*acknowledge you as my wife, the time is near when we will go beyond the Rocky Mountains and then you will be acknowledged and honored as my wife." He also said, "... It is a command of God to you. I will give you until tomorrow to decide this matter. If you reject this message the gate will be closed forever against you."*<sup>2</sup>

Ultimately, Lucy received "a powerful and irresistible testimony of the truthfulness and divinity of plural marriage."<sup>3</sup> On May 1, 1843, 17-year-old Lucy was "married" to the 44-year-old Prophet in a religious ceremony.

After Walker's return to Nauvoo from his mission in 1844, he worked together with his son William as a carpenter in the construction of the Nauvoo Temple. As the Mormon population expanded in Nauvoo, non-Mormons in surrounding towns grew increasingly hostile. This hostility culminated in the assassination of Joseph Smith and his brother by a mob on June 27, 1844. After Smith's death, the violence against Mormons escalated, and it was clear that they could not remain in Nauvoo. By the end of 1845, Brigham Young, Smith's successor as Church leader, negotiated a truce so that Nauvoo's close to 12,000 inhabitants could safely leave the area.

John Walker and his children were part of the Nauvoo exodus and migrated to the Salt Lake Valley in Utah Territory. They did not travel together but made the 1400-mile journey with different wagon-train companies. John's eldest son, William Holmes, joined a voluntary military group, the Mormon Battalion, and reached the Salt Lake Valley on July 29, 1847, only five days after the first wagon train arrived in the Valley and Brigham Young declared that "this is the place" where the Mormons would establish their new home. Catherine Walker Fuller, with her husband Elijah, departed in June 1847, with the Daniel Spencer/Perrigrine Sessions Company. There were 185 individuals and 75 wagons in the company when it began the journey from an outfitting post on the Elkhorn River in Nebraska Territory. The company arrived in Salt Lake City on September 24, 1847. Lucy Walker, who entered into a plural marriage with Heber C. Kimball after Joseph Smith's death, spent the next several months at



Lucy Walker Smith Kimball

a camp in Winters Quarters, Nebraska Territory. She and her husband left Nebraska with a group of 662 individuals on June 7, 1848; they arrived in Utah on September 24. The other siblings emigrated to Utah over the next few years.

John Walker left Nauvoo on February 21, 1846, and camped with other Mormons on Sugar Creek, Iowa, the first staging ground for Mormons fleeing Nauvoo. There, in April 1846, Walker married Elizabeth Walmsley, a widowed convert from England. They moved on to Winter Quarters, Nebraska Territory, an encampment of approximately 2,500 fellow Mormons, all waiting for spring to continue their journey to the Salt Lake Valley. John and Elizabeth's first child was born in February 1847, but lived only two months. Their second son was born in Iowa in late 1849.

In the summer of 1850, John, without his wife and son, departed from Kaneshville, Iowa, with the Edward Hunter Company, a train of 67 wagons. He arrived, one of 261 company members, in Utah on October 13, 1850. The Hunter Company was the first "Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company" in which poor Mormons emigrated with financial help from the Church. In the 1850 Census, John reported that he had no assets and four household members. John's wife did not make the journey to Utah until 1852. Between 1850 and Elizabeth's arrival, John took two additional wives. Elizabeth left John shortly after her arrival. Sometime thereafter, John moved with his fourth wife to Farmington where he established a farm.

During the last years of his life, John lived in the household of Lot Smith, a wealthy farmer who had married John's daughter Jane in a plural marriage in 1852. The 1860 Census reports that 66-year-old John Walker and his wife had an 8-year-old daughter and few assets. John Walker died on October 18, 1869. He is buried in the Farmington City Cemetery.

The children of John and Lydia Walker all remained members of the Mormon Church. Two, Lydia and Henry, died during John's lifetime. Three (William, Lorin, and Catherine) moved from the Salt Lake Valley pursuant to a directive, from Brigham Young, to establish 350 new towns in what would become Nevada, Idaho, and Montana. William served as a missionary in Africa for two years between 1852-1855. before moving, with two wives, to Lewisville, Idaho Territory, a sizable Mormon settlement along the Snake River. He died there in 1908. Lorin, whose first wife, Lavinia Smith, was Joseph Smith's niece, moved from Salt Lake City to Rockland, Idaho Territory, in 1883 and died there in September 1907. Catherine briefly moved to Nevada but returned to Utah. In 1856, she separated from her first husband and thereafter ran a boarding house in Salt Lake City to support her five children. She moved to Nevada again after marrying William Rogers in January 1859. This marriage, too, did not last, and Catherine returned to Farmington, Utah, where her father and younger sister were living. She died in Brigham City, Utah in 1885.

Lucy Walker Smith Kimball's life is more extensively documented than those of her siblings. The genealogical records contain both the diary quoted above and a sketch of her subsequent life as a plural wife of Heber C. Kimball. Lucy arrived in Salt Lake City in 1847 with Kimball. They had eight children, but four died before the age of two. In 1868, Lucy and Kimball moved to Provo, 45 miles south of Salt Lake City, where Kimball died later that year. Lucy remained in Provo until the 1880s when she moved to Salt Lake City and lived with her youngest daughter, Lydia Holmes, until her death in October 1910.

(continued on page 8)



## Part 1: Peacham in the 1920s and 30s: Memories of Thelma Schoolcraft White (1915–2014)

**Editor's Note:** Thelma Schoolcraft White (Thelma) lived in Peacham for more than 90 years. Thelma attended and taught in Peacham's schools. She and her husband, Charles, raised four children at their farm in East Peacham. Thelma was member of the Congregational Church and sang in the choir. She was also an ardent and expert naturalist. The Windsong Bird Sanctuary adjoining the White farm is part of her legacy to Peacham.

In 2004, Ann Mills (AM) interviewed Thelma in her East Peacham kitchen. Excerpts from the interview follow. Some quotations have been rearranged for continuity of subject matter. Some repetition and interjections (umm, well, etc.) have been omitted.

### Moving to Peacham and Life on the Penny Street Farm

Thelma was born on February 2, 1915, in Walden, Vermont, to Gaylord and Christabel Schoolcraft. According to Thelma, her parents relocated to “a nice big farm on the river” in Newbury shortly thereafter. Thelma's parents were pleased with life on the Newbury farm until the early 1920s when Thelma's older brother, Clifton, began high school. Thelma's parents “were not happy at all” with the education Clifton was getting in Newbury. The Peacham Academy “was well known all over the state as being a super prep school. Newbury School wasn't as good [as the Academy] and

they wanted Clifton and me to have the best.”

Thelma's parents decided to relocate to Peacham and “hunted around 'til they found a place up on Cow Hill.” The place Thelma's parents found, at the top of Penny Street, was “a small farm, . . . about 20 cows.”

**Thelma (TW):** Milk [from these cows] was churned and the cream went to Barnet [or, when the creamery in South Peacham was still in operation, there.] This was when the butter went to Boston. . . . And my father cut a lot of lumber to make up for what the cattle didn't bring in.”

**AM:** And, so, did you and Cliff work as on the farm?

**TW:** Oh, yes. . . . Then, if you were on a farm, really, you were kind of important, and it was important that you did your chores well. Perhaps it was only feeding the calves. But, if you didn't feed the calves just right, they got the scours and died, and now it's part of the income gone.

### At the Penny Street farm, Thelma's family had a ten-party telephone line.

**TW:** If you wanted to know what was going on, you lifted the receiver. If you heard it ring, you listened in. And when you got a call, you'd hear these various click-click-clicks. But this was a ten-party line when we came here. And that's a lot of people on one line. So, if they all get on, you couldn't hear very well.

**AM:** Was the telephone operator Mrs. Hobart?

**TW:** Yes. She was quite an interesting person. But she knew all of everybody's lives. She couldn't help it. No, she couldn't. We called it “central” then. And all the calls had to go through her.

**AM:** So, she would tell you if somebody was out of town?

**TW:** Yes. And she really was good in emergencies because she was right on top of it. And they had to, it had to go through her if you had an emergency call. And, so, she would not only get the call through, but then she'd call other people who might be able to help. So, it

was pretty wonderful to have her. And she was about as big as a pint of cider. She was a tiny, tiny woman. She married. And he was the taxi driver, [the] town car driver.

**AM:** Your family came to church?

**TW:** Oh, yeah. There were two churches in town then. Well, only for a very short time. There was a Methodist church where the town hall is, and that was going. But we had a very strong, popular minister, Reverend Warner, in the Congregational Church. And that, sort of—I think, without knowing it—wooded them to the Congregational Church because I don't know who the [Methodist] minister was, but apparently it was a bit blah. So, pretty soon everybody was coming there. And he [Rev. Warner] was something else. His girlfriend died, over in Ireland, whom he was engaged to, and that just about finished him. And, so, he was very emotional, and he'd get to doing some of his preaching and the tears would come down. You would have thought it would have made people not want to come. But, somehow, it endeared him. Yes, it did. And he walked to visit everywhere. He didn't have a horse and so probably didn't get paid enough. And, so, he walked and would be at your house sometime for a meal, usually for supper. But maybe—at our house, anyway, because it was quite a walk up there—my dad would hitch the horse and take him back.

**AM:** Now he was living at the brick parsonage?

**TW:** Yes.

**AM:** And when did you join the choir?

**TW:** I sang my first solo when I was ten. You had to be 15 or 16 [to join the choir]. I can't remember which. And I was an awful giggler. Oh, it was pathetic. I don't know how they ever stood me. And, anyway, I couldn't wait to get to be 15 or 16, whichever it was. But Phyllis Craig [Graves] and I were bosom pals. And, in the wintertime, my father being a carpenter at that time, he needed to get out easier than he could up on Cow Hill. So, they rented the little house where Nancy Bundgus lives in the wintertime. Well, Phyllis, of course, lived the other side of the church. We didn't think we

could spend a weekend without one night together. Well, the night before my first experience in the choir, we spent the night together. The bed went down, and, of course, we giggled all night. Dad had to prop it up with a chunk. Well, I get up to sing. My mother was very unhappy with me that Sunday, and I looked down and there's Phyllis, of course. What does Thelma do? Not good. Not good.

### **The Penny Street School**

Clifton, ten years older than Thelma, started school at the Academy after the Schoolcraft family moved to the Penny Street farm. Thelma became a student at the Penny Street School, one of Peacham's one-room schoolhouses for students in grades one through eight.

**TW:** They had nine schools then, and each one of them would go from grade one through eight. There was East Hill School, East Peacham School. Penny Street, North Part, Ewell Hollow, South Peacham, Green Bay. And two out that way, way out towards where Lorna Quimby used to live. . . .

**AM:** So, at the Penny Street School, about how many students?

**TW:** Usually, eight to ten students. Most of the school was made up of Threshers, the Thresher family. And it was big. There were eight kids, and they always had at least five in grade school then. But once we had 15 for just a little while because it was a lumber job going on. And they lived in kind of a camp. And there were several kids from that. They were teenagers. The oldest one was 15, I think. So, it seemed exciting at the time, you know, to have all these strangers because, at that time, everybody knew everybody in the whole town.

I had the same teacher all eight years. May Edison. And she was a very good teacher in the basics. She was wonderful at teaching math . . . and writing, that kind of thing. [But] I didn't realize history was interesting 'til I went to high school . . . because what we did was look [things] up. We were given a name. This is in seventh and eighth grade. We would be given a name to look up or something in the encyclopedias. We didn't really have a class in it. And, so, we missed a lot of what could have been exciting history.

**AM:** And nature. Was that where you were ignited to learn [about it]?

**TW:** Well, I guess—My father was brought up by Indians, you know, just over the border. . . . His father married five times and outlived all but the last one. But his mother died when he was nine. And the next wife, his father's next wife had three boys that abused him in every way you could think of. So, he ran away. And they lived in Albany at that time. So, he went into Canada because they couldn't get him there. I think he was 14, 15. And so he waited until he was 21 and he came back. But the Indians took him in up there when he ran away. It was quite a powerful learning experience. So, he had a little different viewpoint on things to give us than most dads would.

**AM:** What about recess? Were there games?

**TW:** Well, . . . you did pull away in the summer and kick the can in the winter-time, box and geese, right. Things like that.

### **The Peacham Academy**

After completing eighth grade at the Penny Street School, Thelma became a student at the Peacham Academy. Here, there were "70, 60 to 75" students as well as classes taught by different teachers.

**TW:** We had a French teacher. And we had a Latin teacher. And between them, they taught the history. And then English and math. And the principal taught the math.

**AM:** Any biology or chemistry?

**TW:** Well, they had chemistry. You had to be a junior before you could get that. But yes, we had chemistry and one other science.

**AM:** What about government?

**TW:** Yes, we got that in eighth grade. We had what they called civil government, and that was a requirement of eighth grade. And you had to be good at it before you could graduate.

**AM:** Were there special experiences or teachers at the academy that you particularly enjoyed?

**TW:** Well, of course, Mr. Hoxie, Irwin Hoxie, was, oh, he was wonderful. He was my favorite. He was the principal. And I guess, probably, I had it a little better than some because I sang. And oh, he had a beautiful voice. And we used to do operettas. We gave an operetta every year. Well, [from] the first year I always got a leading part in it because I did sing and not too many of them sang, you know, solo, that type of thing. [One year,] . . . two or three days before we gave the operetta, Richard, [the male lead], . . . got appendicitis and had to go to the hospital. So, guess who I had to do my love scene with? The principal. Yes, but it worked out all right. He was able to make me feel better after. But, thinking ahead, [I thought] I don't know if I can do this.

**AM:** Were there other special activities?

**TW:** Well, you always had the junior play. And there was a senior party at the Choate Inn [which then occupied the house two south from the library]. It was a lunch. Oh, it was lovely. I can't seem to remember very much about it. . . . [But] it was fancy. And you had to have your best table manners. And I think my mother, anyway, made sure I knew them, which I've forgotten now, I guess.

**AM:** Were there dances at the Academy?

**TW:** Oh no, no. Because one of the trustees of the Academy was Moses Martin and [to him] dancing was a sin, a huge sin because you were hanging on to each other. Oh, but we got away with it. We had, what did we call them? Promenades. And they turned into almost square dances. Not quite, but almost, because you had, you know, to hold your hands across.

**AM:** So, were dances scheduled as a monthly event or just an occasional happening? And then would all of the families come to town? Or would it just be the children from the Academy?

**TW:** I think it was mostly the Academy students.

**AM:** And chaperoned, I assume.

**TW:** Oh, yes. Oh, boy. Yes, you didn't go out of sight anywhere.

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(*John Walker* continued from page 5)

There are few families more intimately connected with the Prophet Joseph Smith and the early Mormon Church than that of Peachamite John Walker. The Walker family experienced persecution because of their Mormon faith, endured the hardships of the emigration from Nauvoo to the Salt Lake Valley, entered into plural marriages, and established new lives as pioneers in Utah Territory and beyond. They also remained committed and active members of the church which led John from Peacham in 1832.

#### JUTTA SCOTT

1. Familysearch.org, a Mormon Church genealogical website, provides biographies of John Walker and other family members. It also provides information about the Walker family's experiences in New York, Missouri, and Illinois and their migration to the Salt Lake Valley. U.S. Census records, found on the Ancestry.com, provided additional details. PHA possesses a typed and undated manuscript, entitled "John Walker & Lydia Holmes," which contains a detailed history of John Walker's life after his conversion in 1832. The Walker Family Organization website also provides detailed biographical information about John Walker and other family members who also converted to Mormonism

2. Lyman Omer Littlefield, *Reminiscences of Latter-day Saints: Giving an Account of Much Individual Suffering Endured for Religious Conscience* (Logan: Utah Journal Co, 1888), 46–48; see also testimony in Andrew Jenson, "Plural Marriage," *Historical Record* 6 (July 1887): 229–30, quoted in Biographies of Joseph's Smith's Wives: Lucy Walker, [https://josephsmithspolygamy.org/plural-wives-overview/lucy-walker/#link\\_ajs-fn-id\\_5-5642](https://josephsmithspolygamy.org/plural-wives-overview/lucy-walker/#link_ajs-fn-id_5-5642).

3. Id.

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