

*A life sketch of*

# John Beauchamp Walker

---

1814 – 1856

There have been several spellings of the name Beauchamp - Beachem and Beacham. The original spelling was Beauchamp, but since the pronunciation is Beacham, one can easily see how the other spellings came about. The name Beauchamp dates back to two brothers; Edward and Edmund Beauchamp, who came from England to America in the seventeen hundreds.



The Beauchamp's were devout Quakers and blessed with considerable means. They acquired extensive holdings in both Maryland and Acoumack County, Virginia. They refused to pay tithes to the Church of England and were regarded as 'dissenters' and 'non-conformists'. The Walkers were Scotch Presbyterians and non-conformists to the greatest extreme. Such was John Beauchamp Walker's heritage.

John Beauchamp Walker was born March 24, 1814 in Livingstone, Kentucky. Shortly after his birth, the family left Kentucky and settled near the little town of Madison, Davidson County, Tennessee. John grew up here along the banks of the Cumberland River. He attended the old Mt. Zion Church on the plantation of his grandfather, Thomas Walker.

About 1830, the Walker Family moved to Lauderdale County, Alabama, where they established a dairy in 1833. Soon after they were settled, Daniel Brown and his family left Williamson County, Tennessee and settled in Lauderdale, Alabama, where they also established a dairy. It was here that John B. Walker and Elizabeth Ann Brown met and fell in love. They were married in 1835.

The territory of Tishimingo, Mississippi, was acquired from the Indians by the United States Government and thrown open for settlement. The Walkers moved and acquired as much of this new territory land as they were allowed to have. Two daughters, Mary Jane, born April

16, 1836, and Sarah Elizabeth, born June 14, 1838, joined the family while living in Tishimingo, Mississippi.

About this time the first Mormon missionaries, Elder Jessie Hunter and Elder L. Clapp arrived in the area. John and Elizabeth Ann joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. An old record in possession of Helen Reidhead Rhoton and supposedly in the handwriting of Elizabeth Ann Walker states that John B. Walker was baptized in 1839 by Elder Jesse Hunter and he was ordained by Elder L. Clapp, December 6, 1839.

Thomas Walker, John's brother and dairy partner, was sick in bed at the time John and Elizabeth were baptized. When Thomas learned of the baptism he vowed to 'get well, form a mob and run the elders out of the country'.

John and Elizabeth then moved to Clinton, Dewitt County, Illinois, where their first son, Jesse Hunter Walker was born February 4, 1840. From Clinton, they moved to Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois, to be with the other saints.

John helped build the Nauvoo Temple and as soon as the temple was open for baptisms, John and Elizabeth were baptized for a number of their kindred dead. (*See notes regarding this at the end of this history*)

The second son of John and Elizabeth Walker was John Taylor Walker. He was born June 29, 1845 at Nauvoo, Illinois.

In the fall, John B. was removed to Winter Quarters, Iowa. His knowledge as a wheelwright was greatly needed at this halfway station. He set up a blacksmith shop at Kaneshville, Pottawatomie County, Iowa, where he repaired wagons and handcarts. John received a patriarchal blessing from Isaac Morley while he was in Kaneshville. He gave his name as John Beauchamp Walker, born March 24, 1814.

John and Elizabeth's family grew with another daughter, Margaret Ann Walker born December 27, 1847 at Winter Quarters, and sons, Joseph Ephraim born February 1, 1847, William Albert born 25 April 1850, James Ephraim born June 8, 1852 all at Kaneshville, Iowa.

John was made captain of a company of pioneers heading for Salt Lake City, Utah. The Walker family left Kaneshville in June 1852. There were 250 souls in the company and they arrived in Salt Lake City on October 3, 1852.

In the spring of 1854, John and his family, along with several other families moved to Grantsville, Tooele County, Utah. They organized into groups; some to build houses, others to plant crops. Every man, woman and child were put to work to prepare food and shelter for the coming winter. Here another daughter Selena Masanile was born February 4, 1855.

It was a hard spring and summer and to further complicate things a tribe of Indians, who lived close by, kept demanding food for themselves and to take home to others. The church admonished its members to feed the Indians instead of fighting them, but this was getting out of hand.

In desperation, the men of the village met at the Walker home to decide what to do. John stood up and said, "Brethren, it seems there is only one way to handle this, we must call Chief Moon Eye and appeal to him for help. He has always been friendly to us and I believe he will consider our difficulties." This proposition was accepted and John B. was sent as a messenger to Chief Moon Eye.

When John and Chief Moon Eye met, John explained, "Chief, you have always been a good friend to us and we like you and your people. We want to live here in this land with you. This is the only place we have to go. Now you know we have always given your people food when ever they have come among us, but now we are running low on our food supplies and if we continue to feed your people our wives and children will starve before we can harvest a crop. Please talk to your people and tell them not to ask for more food until we can harvest a crop."

The chief replied that he would go among his people and scold them and tell them to leave the white people alone. As he walked out the door he remarked, "Red man may need white man's help sometime."

Through wisdom and understanding, John B. Walker was instrumental in saving the people of Grantsville from starvation that first winter. As the story continued, Chief Dick Moon Eye returned and instructed his tribe to leave the white man alone. Most of them complied, but a few of his tribe members took sides with a young brave who wanted to be chief. He was a strong young man and because he had recovered from a gunshot wound he was thought to have supernatural powers, which many thought made him more fit to be chief.

Chief Moon Eye's trouble increased and the white community heard of his increased troubles. When John heard of the problems he remarked, "Well, it won't be long before we will have the privilege of paying our debt back to the chief."

Unfortunately for the Chief, John died before the final climax of his troubles. The young buck who wanted to be chief took a fancy to Moon Eye's youngest squaw and he took her and fled into the mountains. In desperation the chief went to the office of the commissioner, Mr. Mitchell, and begged for some soldiers to help him get his wife back. Not having the understanding of Indians that John was blessed with, Mr. Mitchell treated it as a joke and said, "Now Dick, why should you be so concerned about one wife, there are a lot of women in your tribe just forget the one your enemy ran away with." This was a grave mistake. The old Chief immediately lost faith in the white man. He replied, "Mr. Mitchell, you can not talk to me like that. Indian marriage is just as sacred as white mans. You go to the Devil," and he stalked out of the office.

Mr. Mitchell realized his mistake, but it was too late and Chief Moon Eye would never again trust the white man. He returned to his home and in the flickering firelight bowed down in grief. The door opened and there stood his young squaw. Her eyes met his for a brief instant and Chief Moon Eye reached for his gun. Although the young wife was aware of her fate, she never moved a muscle as the shot shattered the stillness of the night. She sank to the floor dead; an old custom was fulfilled.

The Chief then made plans to destroy his rival enemy. He reasoned that he would have to shoot him in both arms so he could then finish him off because he had a superstitious fear of the young man's supernatural powers. Taking his time and spying out the young buck's habits,

he waylaid him on a certain path the young man took to the spring each morning. According to his own story...“When the fellow passed by I fired and the young buck jumped about five feet into the air and fell to the ground dead.”

Peace was restored to the tribe, but Chief Moon Eye never forgave the white men. Although he never caused any trouble he avoided any contact with them.

John Beauchamp Walker died in the prime of his life. What caused his death is unknown, but these facts are evident - he was a man of deep religious conviction. His courage and determination to locate his family in a place where they could worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience marks him as a worthy ancestor that all his descendants can be proud of. His grave is in the cemetery at Grantsville, Utah and is marked by a red sandstone marker with this inscription “John Beauchamp Walker died 10<sup>th</sup> of March 1856.” He was buried with military honors.

John had been a captain in the Utah Militia in the Tooele Military District.

For years his daughter, Salina, had in her possession some old Mexican shoulder ornaments or epilates that had decorated his military uniform.

—

An interesting survey made by Alice M. Rich of the historian’s office dated August 29, 1939, states:

Index card of Temple Record #1760, book A1 page 140:

John Beauchamp born March 24, 1814, Livingstone County, Kentucky, died March 10, 1856.  
Living sealing September 5, 1854 to Elizabeth Ann Brown born October 24, 1816.

Volume 14 page 54 #17, John B. Walker’s patriarchal blessing given by Isaac Morley, April 15, 1848. John and Elizabeth were endowed January 7, 1848.

Sarah Evans of Shiprock, New Mexico, visited the Genealogy Library in Salt Lake City, Utah and discovered these records dated April 22, 1844:

John B. Walker baptized in the Nauvoo Temple for his brother-in-law John Martin, niece Penice Martin, sister Nancy Paden, a friend John Chambers and George Walker, relationship not given.

Elizabeth Ann Brown Walker was baptized for her aunt Sarah Jolly, her father Daniel Brown and her mother Sylvia Winset, April 22, 1844.

Richard Evans, husband of Sarah Walker Evans, did further research and found a patriarchal blessing given John Beauchamp Walker, who was born March 24, 1814 to Ephraim Walker and Mary (maiden name Beauchamp).

A careful search of records at the Church Historian's office by Mae Cordon done in 1951 at the request of Margaret Loa Reidhead Stewart revealed the following:

Volume 4 Treasures of Pioneers Past in Volume 5 page 219 - Daughters of Pioneers, Daniel M. Burbank lost his wife while crossing the plains and after three months he remarried Sarah Southworth. John Walker was captain of the company (1852) and he performed the ceremony. The company left Kaneshville, Iowa, July 1852 and reached Salt Lake City, Utah, October 3, 1852.

---

*The author of this Life Sketch of John Beauchamp Walker is unknown. A similar version is credited to the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers.*

*Names, places, and dates have been verified with family genealogy information and records in possession of K. Oswald, and family history records in possession of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.*