

My Father's Field

Based on the life of John M. Horner,
East-Bay Pioneer

Script and Lyrics by

Melva Wheelwright

Music by

Melva Wheelwright

Rick Laurell

Wendy Wheelwright

Lyric Contributors:

Wendy Wheelwright

Lance Wheelwright

Joy N. Hulme

Thomas Johnston

Rick Laurell

Script Contributors:

Thomas Johnston

Kenna McOmber

Lance Wheelwright

Script-Piano-Vocal Score

© 2001

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Order of Appearance

Professor: a savant with a twinkle in his eye (50-60)
Students in writing class: college age men and women
Student David/John Horner: a college student who hopes to be a famous writer
Student Isaac/Isaac Goodwin
Student Will/William Horner, younger brother of John
Student/Rebecca Woodward
Librarian: adult female
Father Stacey Horner: farmer (45, then 60)
Mother Sarah Horner: wife of above, same age
Horner Children (use whatever number of children works; they do not need to be included in Act II):
 John Meirs Horner: begins age 16, ages to 26+ during show (could be two people)
 Fanetta: age 17, (if in Act II ages to 27)
 Redbon: age 14 (Act II ages to 24)
 Elizabeth Ann: age 12 (Act II ages to 22)
 William: age 10 (Act II ages to 20)
 Roulif: age 7 (Act II ages to 17)
 Emmeline: age 5 (ages to 15)
 Lucretia: age 3 (ages to 13)
Elizabeth Imlay: spunky with a gentle side when she wants to use it (13, thru 24)
Young Hickman: conniving son of wealthy banker (17-25, Act II thru 26-38)
Erastus Snow: missionary full of the spirit (20-30)
Joseph Smith: (age 30+)
Brother Woodward: Construction Boss in Nauvoo (30+)
New Jersey Neighbors: dancers of various ages
Rebecca Woodward: wife (20-30)—played by student above
Nathan: their son (age 7-10)
Colonel Levi Williams: leader of a mob, a loud, rough man. (35-55)
Mobsters (3): rough men of any age
Samuel Brannon: man of firm opinions, strong self-interest (29)
Sailors: any age
William Glover: Scotsman with heavy brogue (33+)
Laura Goodwin: pregnant mother of 7 children (33)
Isaac Goodwin: her husband (35)—played by student above
[The ages of their children can be changed according to what is possible on stage]
Emerette: daughter (13)
Isaac jr.: son (11)
Lewis: son (9)
Edwin: son (6)
Nancy: daughter (4)
Ludelia: daughter (3)
Albert: son (1)

Single women: (if wanted) Lucy Nutting, Rachel Reed, Angeline Lovett, Eliz. Margaret Poole, Susan Savage, Zelnora Snow
Capt Richardson: weathered seaman (40-50-55)
Adult Hickman: (see above for detail)
Politician: scheming social climber (35-55)
His Cronies: (any age)
Hoe Down callers: one male, one female with good diction
Hoe Down dancers, men and women of any age
Customer & wife: buys false deed
Poor Stranger: (one of Hickman's Cronies above)
John M. Horner's children:
Wm Jr. (7-9)
John Jr. (5-7)
Joseph (4-5)
Sarah (2-3)
Squatters
Errand runners—young boys, teens
Mrs. Kenfield: a penniless widow (any age)
Immigrants to California: dressed in ethnic costume to show their contribution to California history.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

- Scene 1: Classroom at University in California, present time
- Scene 2: A field in Monmouth County, New Jersey, late spring of 1838
- Scene 3: Stacey Horner residence
- Scene 4: Outdoors, a few days later
- Scene 5: Nauvoo, in process of being built, 1843
- Scene 6: Library, University in California, present time
- Scene 7: Horner family field, 1845-6.
- Scene 8: Town Social in Freehold, New Jersey, later that evening
- Scene 9: A cabin near Nauvoo, 1845
- Scene 10: Office in New York
- Scene 11: Library, University in California, present time
- Scene 12: Aboard the ship, Brooklyn, New York Harbor, Feb 4, 1856
- Scene 12b: The deck of the Brooklyn and hold of ship a few days later
- Scene 13: On the Pacific Ocean
- Scene 14: Off the coast of Valparaiso
- Scene 15: Juan Fernandez Island, May 4, 1846

ACT TWO

- Scene 1: Library, University in California, present time
- Scene 2: California East Bay farmland, 1847-54
- Scene 2b: New office of the J. M. Horner Company, Alameda County and San Francisco gathering spot for Politicians and Bankers, 1854
- Scene 3: John's Office, a week later
- Scene 4: John's remaining farmland, June 6, 1854
- Scene 5: John's bedside, not long after

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Act One

1. Overture
2. An Idea for a Story: Students
3. Library Reprise: Librarian and David Boyd
4. I Long to Know: John Horner
5. New Jersey Morning: Horner Family
6. Testimony of Erastus Snow: Erastus Snow
7. God's Spirit: John and Elizabeth
8. Nauvoo (dance): Nauvoo Townspeople
9. Be Still and Know: Joseph and Angel Choir
10. My Father's Field: John
11. Spanish Dance: New Jersey Townspeople
12. Rustic Reel: New Jersey Townspeople
13. Mob Scene (enactment): Woodward Family, Mobsters
14. Rules and Regulations: Brooklyn Cast
15. (a) The Storm: Choir
(b) Hush, My Darling: Laura Goodwin
(c) God Moves in a Mysterious Way: Brooklyn Cast, Choir
16. (a) Is There an End? Elizabeth and John
(b) Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled: Angel Choir
17. Sea Biscuit (dance): Brooklyn Cast
18. This I Know: Elizabeth, Nancy, and Laura

Act Two

19. Fences: hoe down with two callers, John and family, misc. California citizens
20. Lining My Pockets: Hickman
21. Good, Old Fashioned Way: Hickman, Bankers and Politicians
22. Loss: Elizabeth and Laura
23. Test of Faith: John, Elizabeth, Father Horner, Joseph, Angel Choir
24. Finale - Life's Questions: John, Elizabeth, Angel Choir, Cast