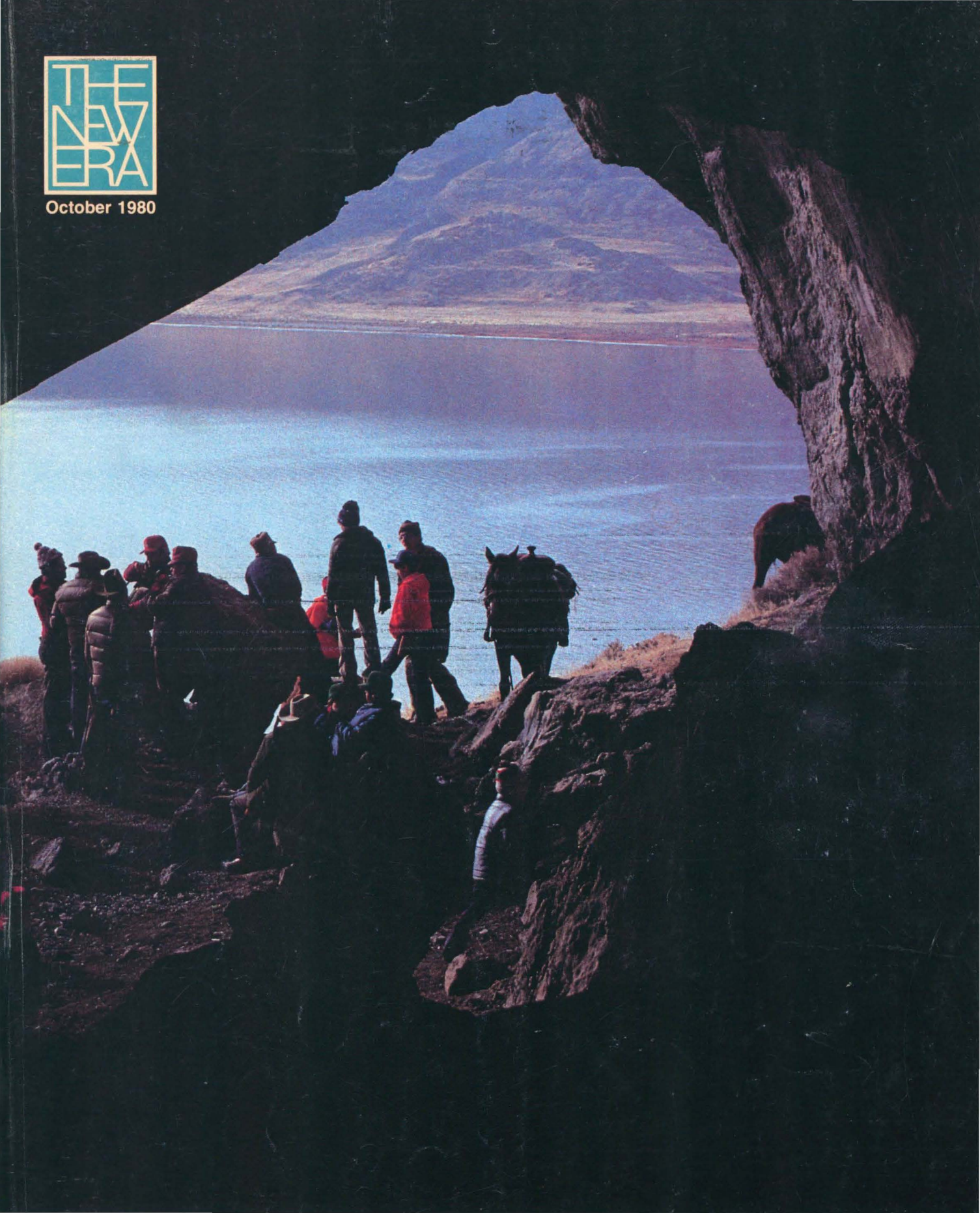




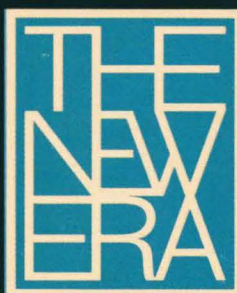
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Cover: Explorers and Venturers from the Corinne Second Ward rest at a cave once used by Shoshone Indians. See story beginning on page 20

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Feedback



October 1980

Shoes

The *New Era* always provides answers to my questions and guideposts for my life. The article "The Shoes of a Winner" by Elder Robert L. Backman (January/February issue) has filled an empty space in my life and has made me want to be a better Latter-day Saint. I know it won't be easy, but Heavenly Father will guide me.

CARLOS A. VALLARINO
Balboa, Panama

Out the window go the downs

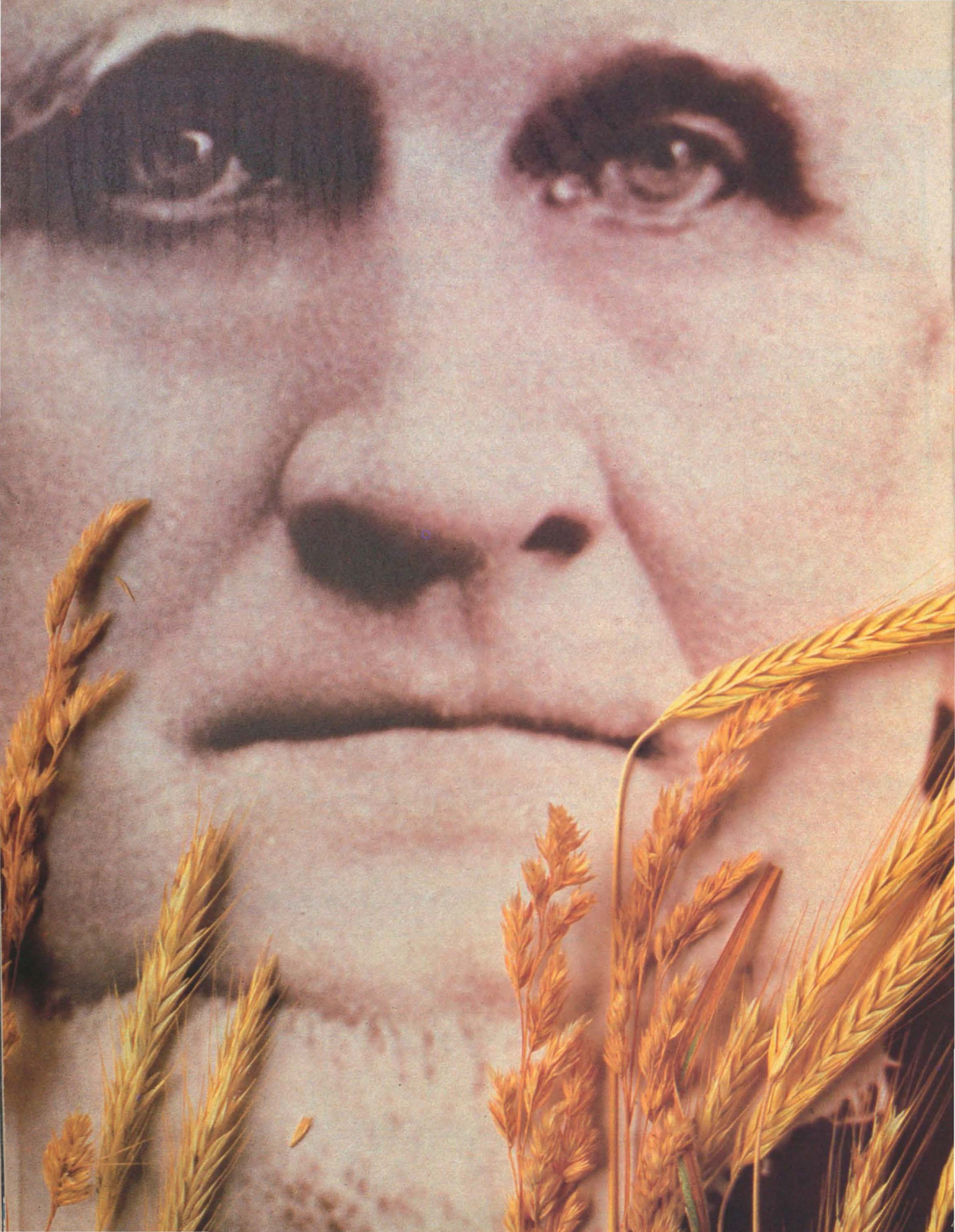
What can I say except thank you very much for a very special magazine? I've been out of work now for five months. Unemployment's so high it's really hard to get a job, and so I get pretty down sometimes. But as soon as the *New Era* comes, out the window go the downs and in through the mailbox comes a real lift. It really lifts me up spiritually and fills me with excitement. I especially enjoy seeing letters and articles printed from or about the Saints in England (It makes a nice change!) as it brings the *New Era* closer to home. The *New Era* awakens me to just exactly what people without the gospel are missing out on—and to the importance of missionary work. It brings humor, learning, and love, both for the Church and for others.

GILLIAN C. PICKARD
Cambridge, England

A boost

I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate the *New Era* and the *Ensign*. Just the other night I was reading all the Mormonisms and Mirthrights I could find. They were super! Sometimes (sometimes more often) I get discouraged, and the Church magazines always help to boost me up and help me get my act together. Thanks a lot from a missionary who is now happier. And by the way, hurry with the next issue!

ELDER DEAN HAGGEN
California San Jose Mission



At the family farm in northern England, he forged the reliance on God that would later sustain him as a prophet

It was Sunday, October 19, 1881, in Box Elder County. The meetinghouse was full on this crisp autumn day, for members of the Church had come from many miles away to attend a special meeting. A tall, white-haired man stood behind the pulpit, his voice firm and strong with a slight British accent that yet lingered after 30 years of living in the Rocky Mountains of the American West. Although 72 years of age—an old man by the standards of the day—he retained the energy and vitality that characterized many men half his age. Now, as he spoke, the congregation listened carefully, for it was not often they were able to hear the President of the Church.

He paused in his address and seemed to reflect for a moment, then turned his attention to the younger members of the congregation. "Through some remarks already made I am reminded of my boyhood," he said. "At that early period of my life, I learned to approach God.

YOUNG JOHN TAYLOR

Many a time I have gone into the fields, and concealing myself behind some bush, would bow before the Lord and call upon him to guide and direct me. And he heard my prayer. At times I would get other boys to accompany me." Now he looked directly at several young members seated before him. "It would not hurt you, boys and girls, to call upon the Lord in your secret places, as I did. That was the spirit which I had when a little boy. And God has led me from one thing to another. But I did not have the privilege that you have. There was nobody to teach

me, while you have access to good men at any time who can direct you in the way of life and salvation. But my spirit was drawn out after God then; and I feel the same yet." (JD, 22: 314-15.)

He finished his address and sat down. As he shook hands with those who crowded the stand to greet him following the meeting, the contrast between the present and that distant past to which he referred must have seemed immense. John Taylor, prophet and Apostle, had indeed traveled far in both space and circumstance since he had been that little boy in the north of England. Yet the experiences of his childhood and youth there remained with him, for they had helped to shape and mold the character, mind, and body of the man who was now recognized as such a powerful leader and articulate defender of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

by James R. Moss

Photos by Eldon Linschoten
and the author
October 1980



President Taylor was born on November 1, 1808, in Milnthorpe, Westmoreland County, England, the second son of James and Agnes Taylor. John's father was a carpenter at the time of his birth, and later worked as an excise officer for the government and as a farmer before emigrating to Canada in 1830. Agnes Taylor gave birth to eight sons and two daughters, but three of her sons didn't survive their infancy, a fairly normal mortality rate for that day and place. John's only older brother, Edward, died at the age of 22, leaving John as the family heir under the English laws of primogeniture.

The region in which young

John spent his childhood and much of his youth is one of the most beautiful in England. It is made up of numerous small villages set amid the rolling green hill country. Immediately to the west is the Lake District, famed even then as a source of creative inspiration for many of England's finest writers and poets, among them being Wordsworth, Coleridge, Ruskin, Southey, Gray, and Beatrix Potter. From such surroundings, John gained an appreciation for beauty and an understanding of nature that strongly flavored his writings as a man. From them also, he grew close to the source of creation, for he felt much closer to God when in the fields than in the church to which his parents took him as a boy.

John was baptized into the

Church of England as an infant, in the Heversham Parish Church that served the villages of Milnthorpe, Stainton, and others in the area. Many years later he contrasted the emptiness he felt after the Anglican church services he attended as a boy with the spiritual solace he received through solitary prayer in the countryside. "I tell you what I used to do when quite a young boy. I made it a practice to go and call upon the Lord; it was before there was any 'Mormonism.' And many scores of times have I gone into fields behind the bushes, and also into hay lofts to call upon God to guide me and keep me from evil and to lead me in the paths of righteousness. Did I feel happy? Yes, for I had a portion of the Spirit of God with me. . . . I used to go to the Church of England; and many of you present used to go too; and we used to say that we were all 'miserable sinners.'

We also confessed every
Sunday that we had
'done the things



we ought not to have done, and left undone the things which we ought to have done.' This was all very true. The teachers themselves did not know any better, neither did we. But I used to take pleasure in calling upon the Lord to lead me in the right way." (JD, 21:218-19.)

These qualities of personal independence and a determined seeking for spiritual guidance were to characterize John Taylor's entire life. At the age of 15, he became an apprentice to a carpenter in the town of Penrith, some 30 miles north of Milnthorpe. Here he continued to pray and here he was converted to the Methodist Church. He was a zealous convert and spent much of his time studying the Bible and encouraging others in the practice of his new faith. One year after joining the church, he became an exhorter, a sort of local preacher who assisted the minister in visiting the outlying circuits and working

with those in need of spiritual guidance.

It was while on one of these circuits that young John received what he later recognized as a revelation that would profoundly affect his life. As he walked toward his destination, he turned to a companion and said, "I have a strong impression on my mind that I have to go to America to preach the gospel" (B. H. Roberts, *Life of John Taylor*, p. 28). This impression never left him and played an important part in his later decision to join his family in Canada in 1832. It was there in the city of Toronto that he was contacted by Elder Parley P. Pratt. Elder Pratt was instrumental in converting John Taylor and most of the Methodist study group John had formed in the city. When John joined the body of the Church in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1837, the revelation received on that country lane in northern England was fulfilled, for he was to spend the remainder of his life preaching the gospel, both in

America and abroad.

Young John was also prepared to accept the restoration of the gospel through other spiritual experiences while yet in his youth. As a very young boy he had seen in the heavens an angel holding a trumpet to his mouth. When Elder Pratt announced that God's angel



had indeed restored the gospel to the earth, John remembered this manifestation of his youth and recognized it had been given to him as a sign of the truth he would receive so many years later. And this was not the only spiritual manifestation he had received, for he reported that "often when alone, and sometimes in company, I heard sweet, soft, melodius music, as if performed by angelic or supernatural beings" (*Life of John Taylor*, pp. 27-28).

These spiritual experiences were undoubtedly important elements of John Taylor's preparation for his future responsibilities as an Apostle and prophet. But there were also other factors in his background that contributed to his capacity for leadership. Young John was raised in a district consisting almost entirely of farmers, local artisans, and small shop owners. These were an independent breed of people, toughened by the rigors of early 19th century living but appreciative of the beauty around them and rich in the joys of family life and friendships spanning many generations. From them John learned early the principles of self-reliance and individual initiative, lessons he would teach others and demonstrate so effectively in his later years of leadership in the Church.

But John Taylor's childhood was not entirely spent in such pastoral surroundings. When he was only six, his father moved the family to the bustling port city of Liverpool, and for the next five years young John grew to know the personalities and problems of city life. We know very little about this part of his history, but he may have attended school there and undoubtedly came to know well the docks and quays as he watched the tall ships arrive and leave the port for destinations the world over. Whatever formal

YOUNG JOHN TAYLOR



education he may have received was surpassed in importance by the hard lessons a young boy would need to learn in order to grow up in a 19th century port city. John left Liverpool with his family in 1819, streetwise and toughened by the experience. The rigors of daily living would have only sharpened his combative spirit, and he returned to the North with a greatly enlarged knowledge of the world around him and an increased capacity to deal with problems on his own.

John's move from Liverpool was due to his father's inheritance of a farm in the village of Hale, two miles south of Milnthorpe. For the next three years, young John lived and worked on the farm and walked the mile into the neighboring village of Beetham to attend school. These were the last years of formal academic training for John Taylor, but they left within him a lifelong love of learning that would one day make him a powerful force for educational pursuits among the Latter-day Saints in early Utah.

At the age of 14, John entered the world of work to receive formal training for a vocation. The apprenticeship system in England then required young men to work for several years with a master of a particular craft or trade before they could themselves be certified as capable of practicing the trade on their own. John followed naturally in his father's footsteps and was apprenticed to a cooper, or barrel-maker, in Liverpool. Unfortunately, John's master apparently failed in business less

than a year after the new apprentice arrived in the city, and John returned home to the family farm at Hale. He next turned his attention northward and apprenticed himself to the carpenter in Penrith where he worked for the next five years, completing his apprenticeship to become a fully-qualified carpenter himself in 1828.

When John Taylor sailed for North America in 1832, he took with him the accumulated training and experiences of his youth in Northern England. These included his schooling, his two apprenticeships, his trade as a carpenter, his farming experience at Hale, his love of the north British countryside, and his exposure to city life in Liverpool. But more important than any of these was a rich spiritual background young John had acquired in England, a background that had prepared him well to accept the gospel and become a leader in the Church. His subsequent accomplishments are well-known. He served with distinction as a missionary in his native Britain in 1840-41 and later in France and Germany. He was an editor of important Church publications and wrote many pamphlets and books used in missionary work. He was a faithful friend and valued associate of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and was with Joseph in Carthage at the time of the martyrdom, being wounded himself four times in the attack. He served as a government official in the State of Deseret and Utah Territory and defended the Church in noted debates with prominent religious and governmental leaders in the United States and Europe. His motto, "The Kingdom of God or Nothing," reflected the character of the man, and he died a vigorous champion of the truth, having served as a member of the

In Liverpool's streets, young John Taylor was seasoned by life in a 19th century port town. It was a background that added depth and perception to his contributions as an author

Quorum of the Twelve for over 40 years and as President of the Church for nearly a decade.

John Taylor's youth had prepared him well for a lifetime of dedicated service to the Lord. He sensed even when he was young that a guiding hand was over him, watching and protecting him until he was ready to fulfill his

foreordained mission in life. As he left Liverpool in 1832 to join his family and eventually his life's work in the kingdom, he experienced a severe storm soon after the ship was out to sea. Undaunted, he recalled, "So confident was I of my destiny that I went on deck at midnight, and

amidst the raging elements felt as calm as though I was sitting in a parlor at home. I believed I should reach America and perform my work." (*Life of John Taylor*, p. 29.)

That work and the formative influences of his youth in accomplishing it stand as a remarkable example for us to the present day. ❧

Acrostic.

Matthew, Thou hast wandered in this world
A lone and forlorn, from the days of thy
R-eligion thy theme; and with truth
I-how hast struggled, contended, and fought
How bright now thy hopes, and rewarded
A-nd Thou exist, & enjoyest, the heaven

I wait around of the Gospel, its full
Y-ea even joy, and salvation for ev
E-ternal thy hopes, which forever
N-ot subject to change, by time
C-elestial thy crown, thy reward
E-ven glory & fulness, to thee

John

Kanawville Dec 25

1849.