



The soaring battlements of Zion National Park

Three Mormon Towns

HERE CAN BE FOUND THE LAND OF ZION'S PAST AND PRESENT

Photographed for LIFE

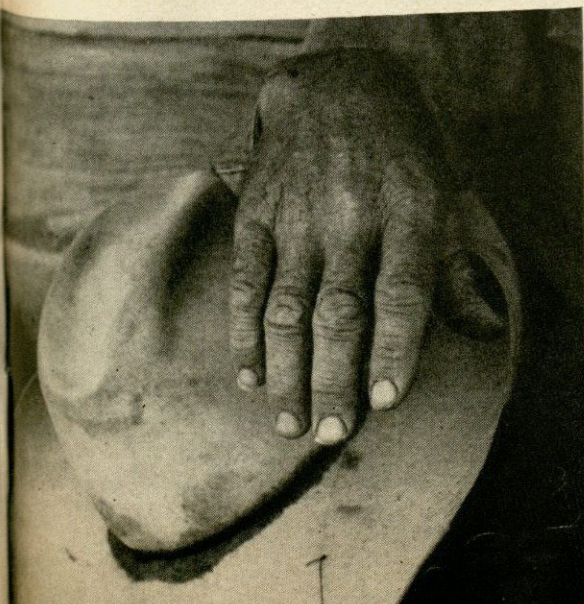
by DOROTHEA LANGE and ANSEL ADAMS

Last year Miss Lange, whose documentary photographs are famous, and Mr. Adams, who is one of America's greatest scenic photographers, told LIFE of their desire to find and portray three towns which together might suggest the whole diversity and depth of Mormon life. LIFE commissioned the project and now presents the story which they assembled with Writer Daniel Dixon.

THIS is the place," said Brigham Young, but at first the brethren were not sure: this was bleak country to call the promised land. They had come 1,400 miles from a past of prejudice and oppression and now their leader had delivered them as he knew he must, for only in the heart of an ungenerous wilderness would they be safe from enemies who twice before had driven them from cities of their faith.

But Brother Brigham could see more than isolation in this land; his eyes, like the prophet Joseph's, burned with images of the future. He saw the desert yield up the walls and roofs of another great city, the seat of an empire, the throne of the kingdom of God on earth. By then the most sceptical of the Saints could sense that there was a nobility in the vast horizons and the wind that smelled of juniper and thunderstorms and the soaring rock temples carved by eternity from the same rock that would blunt plows. This was a place which brought them close to God.

So in 1847 to a land both splendid and forbidding came a people visionary and practical. Ten years after that day when the first wagons groaned to a halt, Brother Brigham's vision of empire was taking shape: the Saints had pushed their little colonies north into Idaho, west to California, south to the rim of the Grand Canyon. Near Zion Park in southern Utah stand the villages of St. George, Gunlock and Toquerville and in them live the grandchildren of pioneers who came from London slums and tidy New England farms to the land they called Zion. These towns differ from each other and from their past; in them are three different expressions of what the Mormon people have become since, a century ago, they ventured into the wilderness on a great adventure of courage and faith.



Weathered hands in a hard land

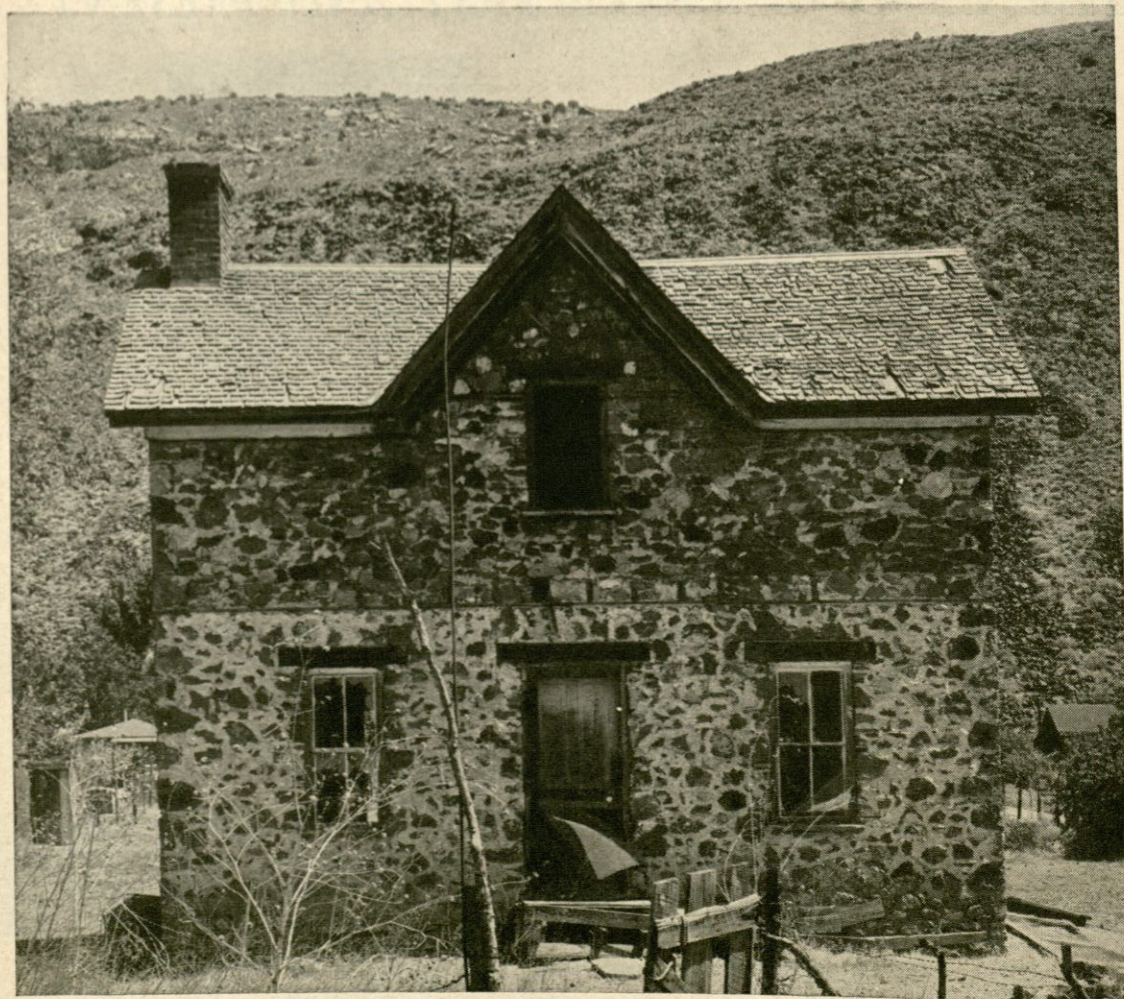


A man's beginnings stay with him



Main Street without end

*Toquerville is old
and quiet but its
children have gone away*



This house was built by the women in the early days while the men were out fighting Indians. That's why the stones are so small.

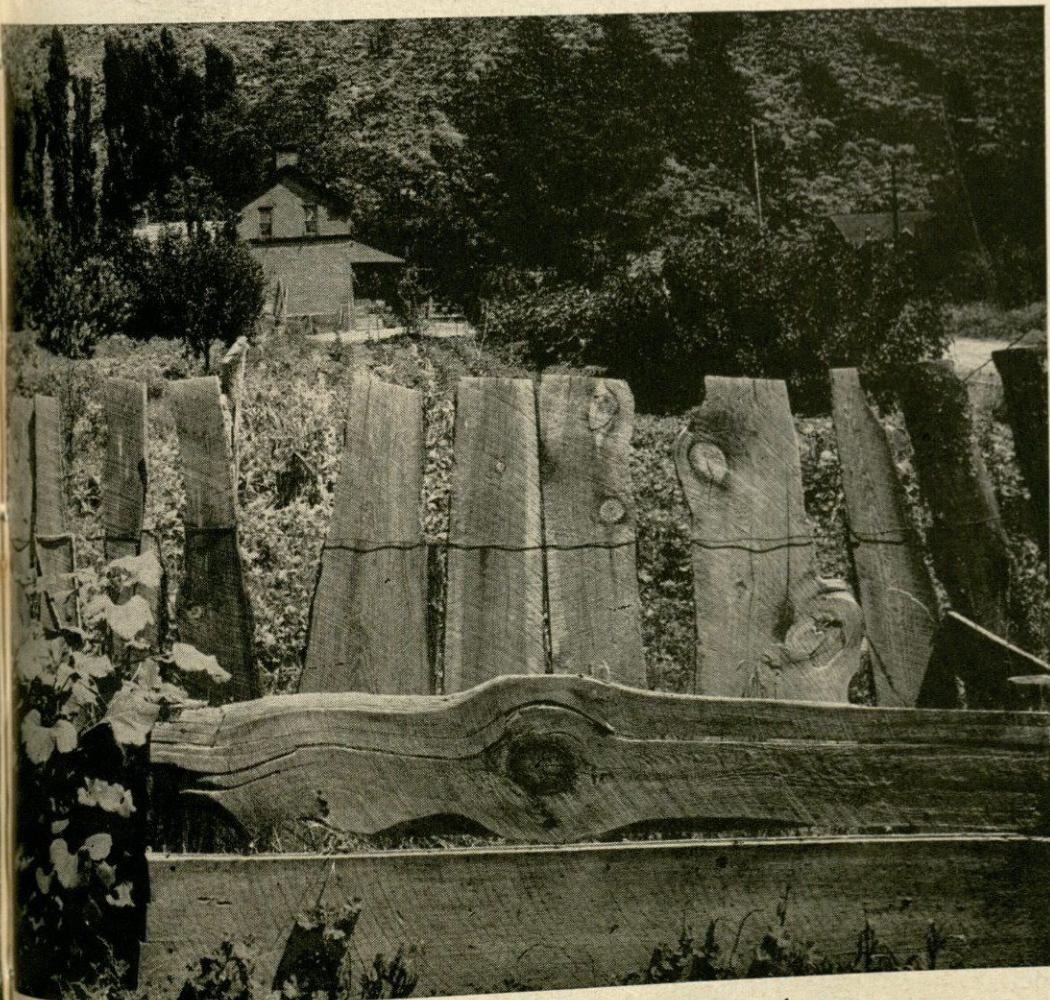


Now the house is empty. Through shards of glass the passer-by glimpses another house.

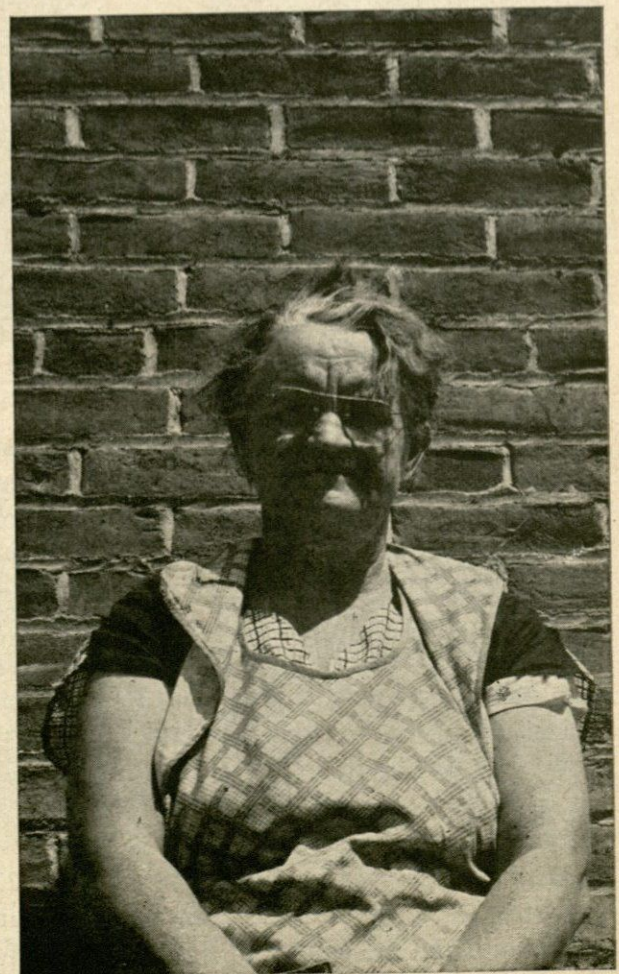


SOME of the towns of Zion have scarcely changed since the pioneers platted the broad streets and lined them with Lombardy poplars and with sturdy houses built of adobe or the rough stone of the region. One of these unchanging towns is Toquerville. It does not have a bank or a movie house, a motel or a cafe. It has a post office and two small grocery stores but no neon sign. Its people are old. Their children and grandchildren have gone away—to live in Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, Los Angeles. Those who remain no longer fight the wilderness and have retired to memories and their church.

Age alone has not kept Toquerville a place apart. Although the Saints are a friendly people, theirs is a lofty, lonely faith. They believe that they are God's Chosen People, keepers of His revealed word, destined to lead all His children into Heaven at the Latter Day. Trucks and tourists and the great highway which bisects their town are not so important to them as their strong and enduring vision of Zion. Sheltered by the stately trees the pioneers planted and sustained by small, productive gardens, the people of Toquerville live quietly in a world the rest of the world nearly forgets.



In the backyard the visitor finds an odd, sagging fence dividing the past from a fertile garden and again the other house amid poplars.



It was her people first lived in the stone house out front. They are now dead.



Main Street full of children

Abundance from the garden



A winter's provender



The future's shy grace



Four young riders in summer

*Gunlock is young
and beginning
to meet the future*

NINE miles of jolting dirt road lead from the highway to the hamlet of Gunlock, a flash of green in a narrow valley. Twenty-two families live here on 247 irrigated acres. The lands are watered from a gentle stream which can rise within hours to flood stage, washing out ditches and roads and leaving the fields covered with gravel and boulders.

Life in Gunlock is most often pleasant and simple; full of friends and horses and children. Mail comes three times a week. The general store sells horseshoes, fly swatters, overalls, soda pop, a few groceries. Outside the store, at the edge of an irrigation ditch, stands the town's only gas pump. There is an old adobe schoolhouse and a new church, which the people built with their own hands, as they built the barns and houses which lead up to the church on either side of the road.

It is not altogether an easy life in Gunlock. The people have large families which their farms are often too small and their cattle too few to support. Some of the men now go daily to St. George, 22 miles away, and work for wages. As the United States swirled over and assimilated the empire of Zion over a half century ago, so now the world outside is reaching toward Gunlock, which in a few years will no longer be what it has always been, an isolated hamlet at the edge of the wilderness.



Pause to talk cattle prices

Gunlock enjoys the Lord's Day



Waiting to go in



Flowers for the church



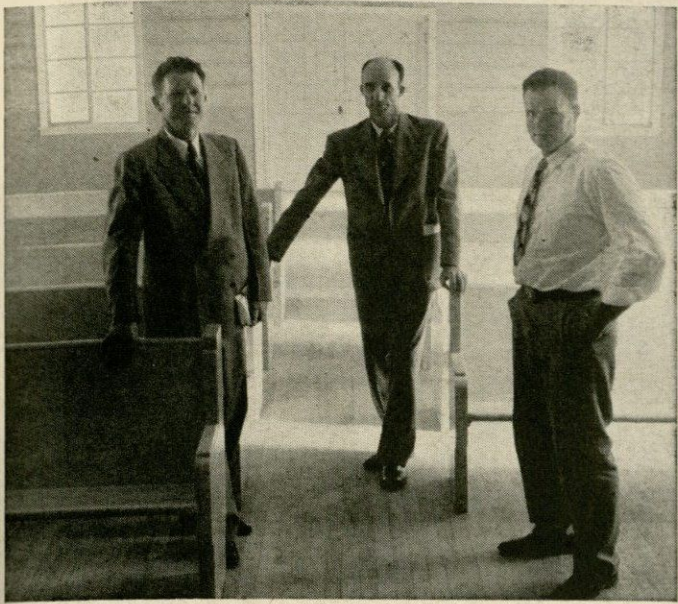
Sunday best



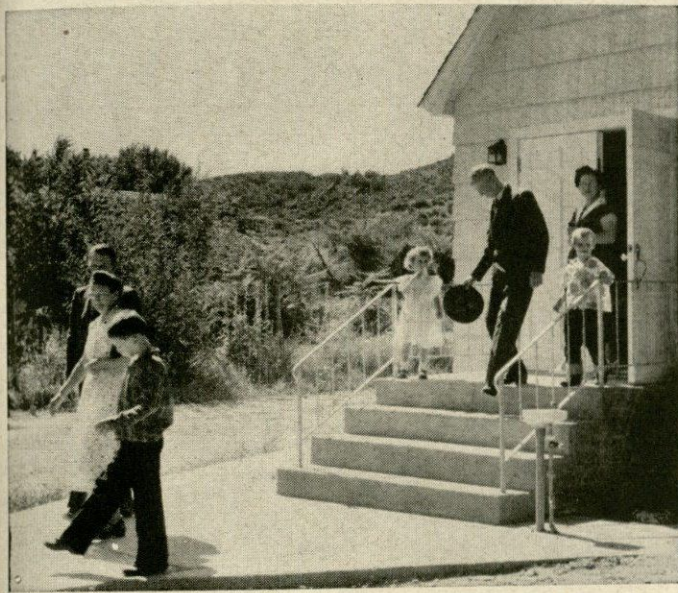
Time to leave



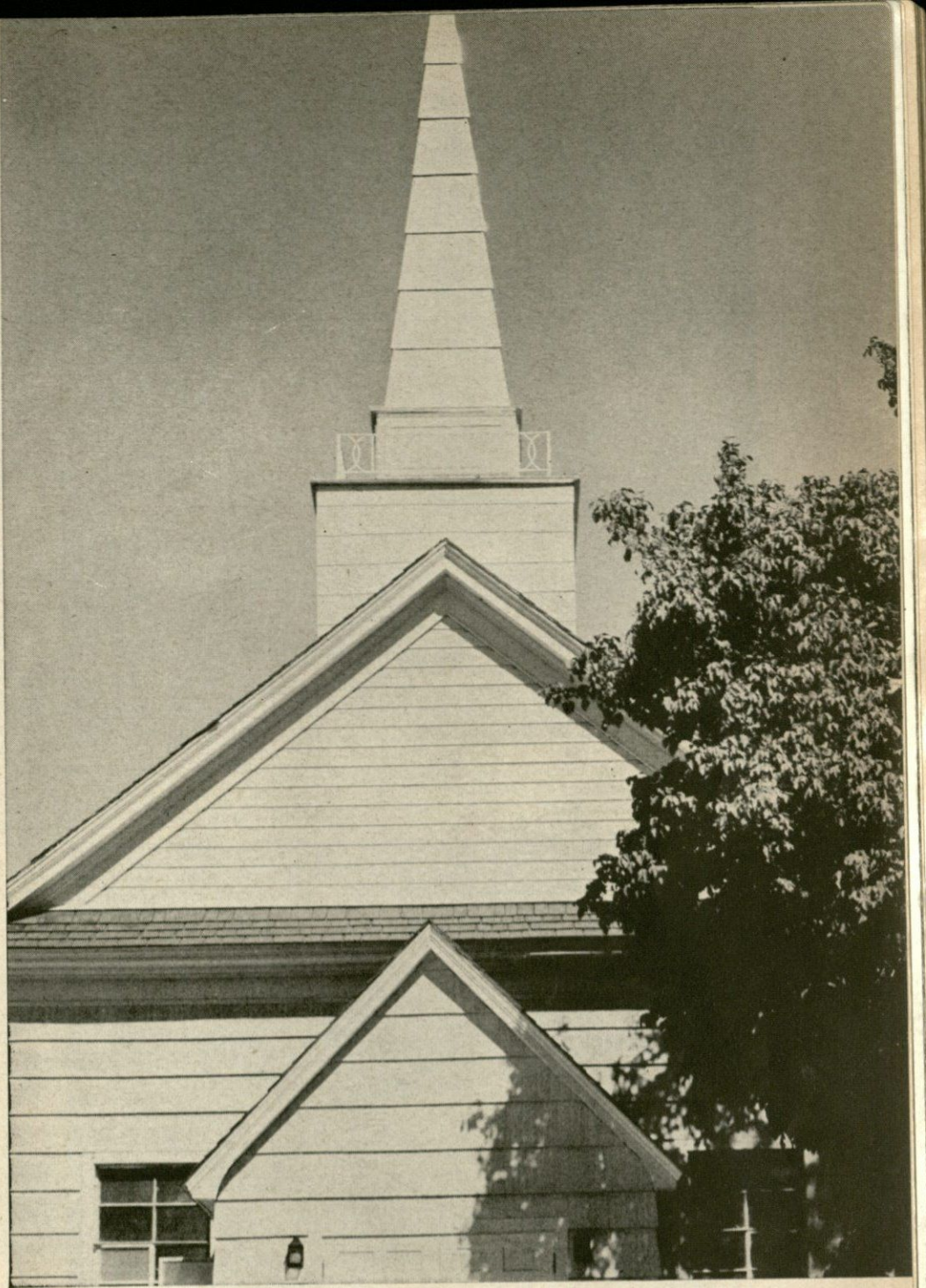
The immanence of God



The young elders of Gunlock



Recessional



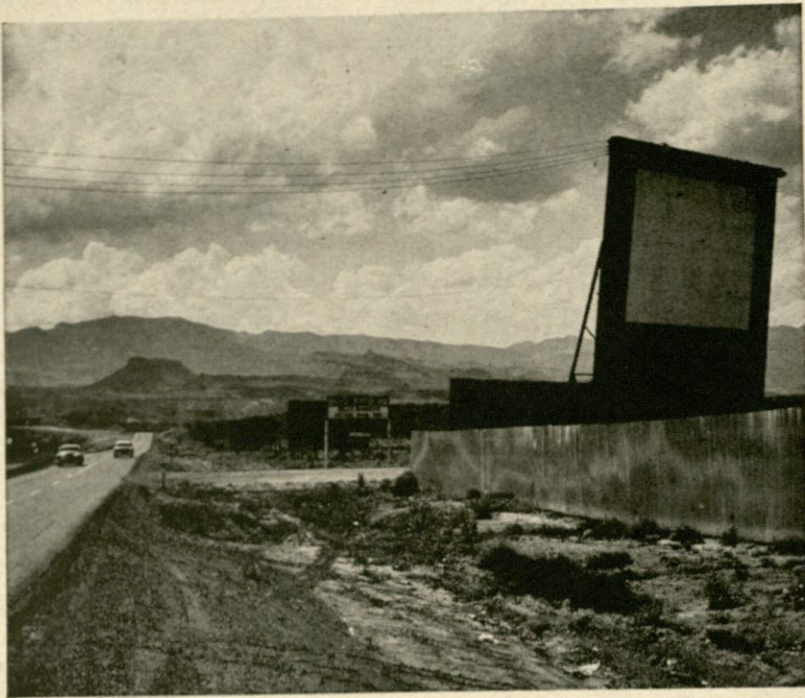
Temple built by the faithful



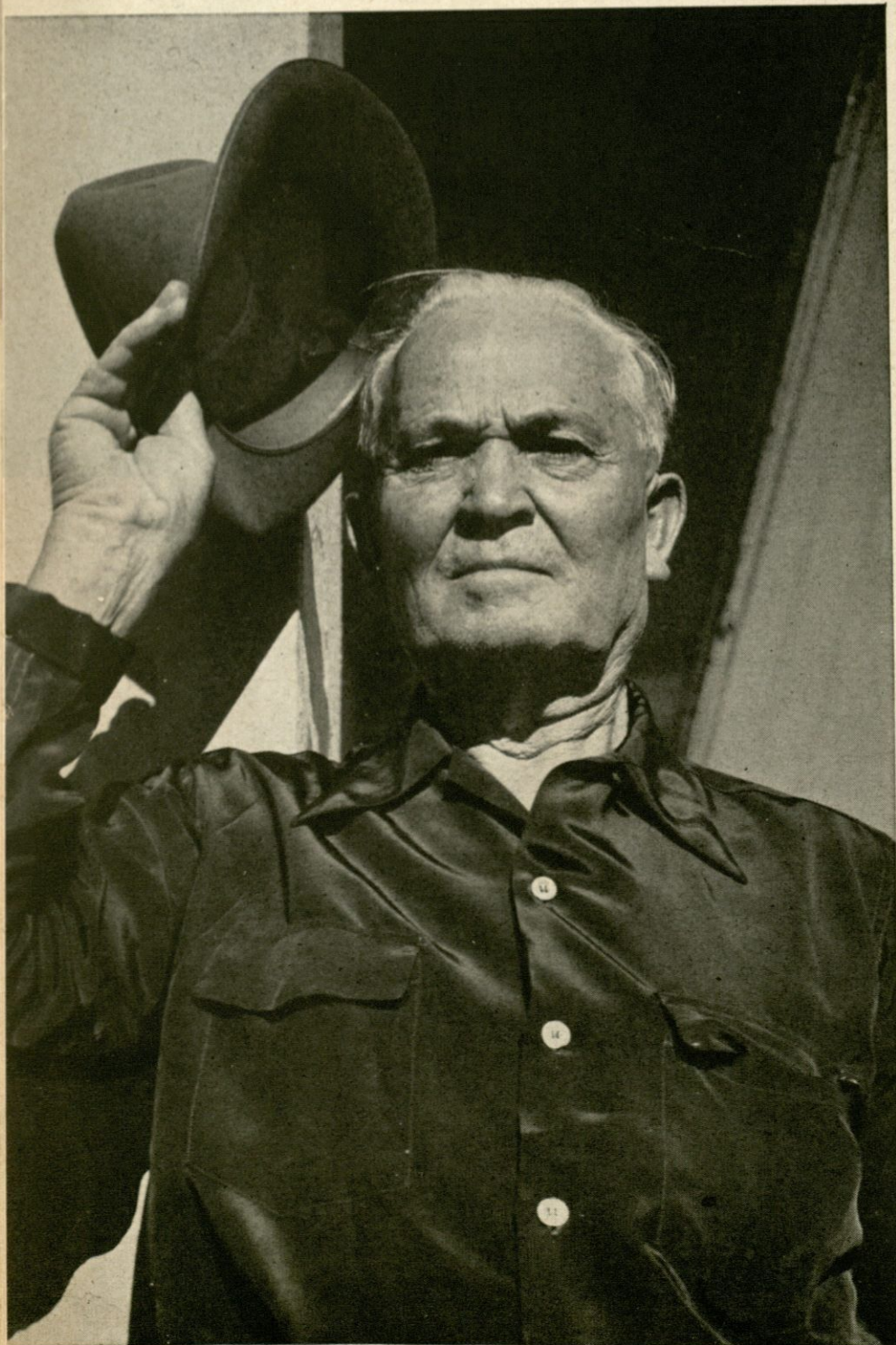
The gathering of the family



The hand of love



Worldly way station on Route 91



Merchant, churchman, owner of the town's first motel

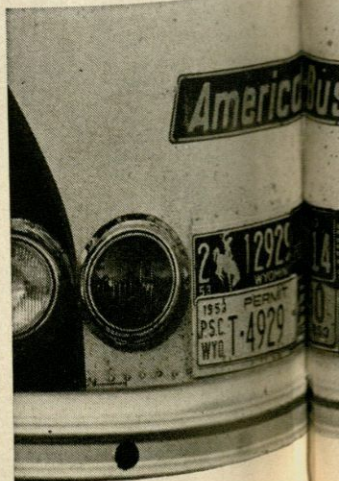


St. George has

*I*N 1861 Brother Brigham dispatched 300 families to found St. George and raise cotton. The cotton never grew but the settlement survived. "Once," someone says, "no good Mormon would give a Gentile a bed to sleep in; now they make a business of it." And so they do; for Route 91 linking Salt Lake City and Los Angeles courses through town like a river of gold



The new era beckons . . .



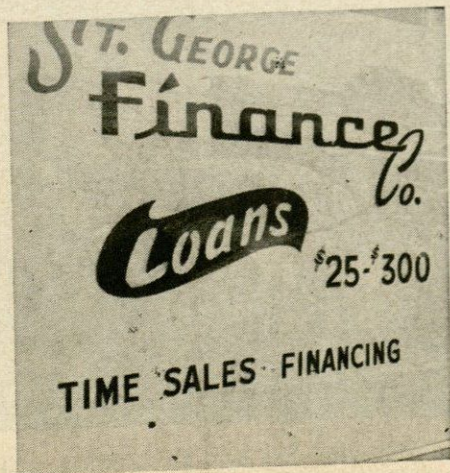
. . . to the restless



The tourists take over Main Street

taken up worldly ways

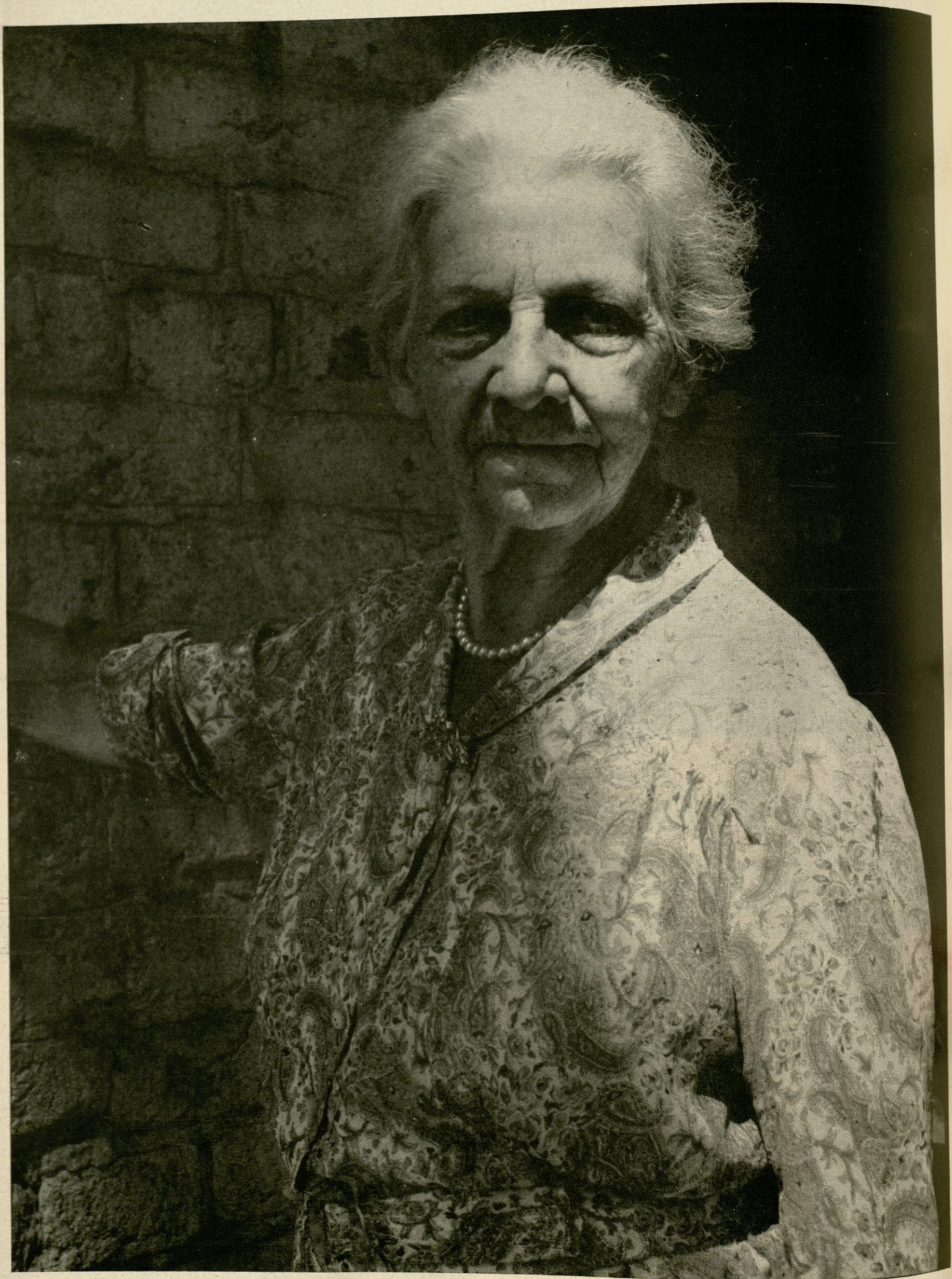
and most of St. George's 4,500 people earn their living catering to passing strangers. They run gas stations, cafes and 23 motels. But while they seem to have given up the past for the present and abandoned the plow for the gas pump their struggle is unchanged. They seek, like their grandfathers, to wrest a living from the desert, and in their way they, too, are pioneers.



... to the enterprising



... and the weary



"My father was born in England. He was the first man to plow a furrow for an irrigated crop in the Salt Lake Valley. I was the fifth child of his

third wife and had 20 brothers and sisters." To her, viewing the strange new ways of St. George, this is still, as Brigham Young said, The Place.