



FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH ON ANCIENT AMERICA

THELONA D. STEVENS, CHAIRMAN / 202 SOUTH PENDLETON AVE. / INDEPENDENCE, MO. 64060

NEWSLETTER NO. 10

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Dear Friends,

Interest in our Newsletter grows.

The alertness of interested members and friends in sending us items possibly related to the Book of Mormon makes possible another newsletter. These contributions are greatly appreciated. Some we were unable to use this time due to space limitations, but they are being filed for possible use later. Some we were unable to use due to lack of documentation. Please be sure that all such materials sent to us have the name of the author and the source (book, newspaper, or other source), publisher's name, date, and page numbers.

Determination on the part of scientists to delve into the mysteries of the ancient inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere continues to prompt searching expeditions. We are confident that the wealth of support of Book of Mormon claims will continue to mount in proportion to the multiplication of these scientific expeditions and other types of researching. Their findings, as reported in many sources, make interesting, even thrilling reading.

Your sharing of what you find will, in turn, be shared with our readers. Thank you.

--T.D.S.

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A story of achievement in delving into the secrets of the past comes out of the dense jungles of the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico through scientific technology supplied by some United States manufacturing companies and U.S. divers and photographers, with the co-operation of Mexican archaeologists and the Mexican government. The account is told in the September 1969 issue of Water & Sewage Works, a Scranton Gillette Publication, Lansing, Michigan in an article titled "Modern Key to Filtration Techniques Provide Study of Ancient Civilizations," pages 346-348. Through the alertness of J. Richard Smith and Beth Thompson, both of Independence, Missouri, this item has come to our attention.

In September, 1967, Norman Scott headed "Expeditions Unlimited of Pampano Beach, Florida" to the Cenote Sagrado, near the ruins of the ancient city of Chichen Itza. There massive stone pyramids and temples mark a Mayan cultural center in which their rites of worship called for human sacrifice in Cenote Segrado, the Mayan well of sacrifice. Not only were humans sacrificed in this well to Chac, their rain god, but the Mayas also threw in their most precious property, such as gold, jade jewelry, weapons, and pottery.

The Cenote Segrado is a tremendous sink hole, 180 feet wide and as much as 127 feet deep, with water as deep as 55 feet in spots. It has been so murky that it has been

impossible in the past to explore its depths. The water was so dark and full of algae that "the visibility of divers was limited to arm's length, sometimes less." Hence, divers could not see what they were doing, and the Mexican authorities stopped explorations on the ground that fragile objects might be destroyed, and findings could not be charted.

Norman Scott, an expert in filtration processes in the swimming pool industry, found that their tremendous pumps could not reduce the water level here, due to the underwater supply sources of the entire Yucatan Peninsula. Hence, he directed the pumping out of nine millions of gallons of stagnant, dirty water, running it through "a bank of filters," and then returning the "crystal-clear" water to the pool. Both the United States and Mexican firms co-operated in this huge undertaking. Scott reported the clarifying of the water so that divers' visibility was good and underwater pictures were taken for the first time. Charles Irwin, Expeditions Unlimited photographer, took the first underwater photographs ever taken in the Cenote Segrado. Victor Segovia, Mexican government archaeologist, was able to do stratigraphic mapping in the clarified water, so that minute records of the expedition could be kept, "noting precisely what was found, where the items lay, and in what sequence."

Some discoveries there have been exciting to researchers since they "may establish connections with people and cultures previously only guessed at," the article states. Artifacts uncovered have determined that the pool received sacrifices after its abandonment by the Mayas. Toltec relics, representing the period following the Toltec-Mayan period of A.D. 925-1200 have been uncovered, it is claimed. Items dating back to the pre-Mexican Classic and the Late Classic periods (A.D. 625-925) have been found in the form of fragments of jade and pottery, they say.

This story concluded by admitting that they cannot really evaluate what the expedition accomplished until "all the hundreds of items recovered have been dated and assembled and given their proper place in the history of Chichen Itza. Some artifacts have resulted in wild claims that here lies proof that Europeans traveled these lands hundreds of years before Columbus. Proof positive lies in the future, with the archaeologists and anthropologist who will pick up where this expedition left off."

Book of Mormon students may well watch for more outcomes as future developments occur in this area. * * * * *

Harry A. B. Robinson, of Kerryville, Texas has drawn attention to a reference by Julius Africanus, a writer of Christian antiquity, who mentioned that the Persians wrote on golden plates, thus substantiating Book of Mormon claims of records on plates of gold (as well as other metals). Julius Africanus wrote,

"Christ first became known from Persia. For nothing escapes the learned jurists of that country, who investigate all things with utmost care. The facts, therefore, which are inscribed upon the golden plates, and laid up in the royal temples, I shall record; for it is from the temples there, and the priests connected with them, that the name of Christ has been heard of . "

Writings of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol VI, p. 128
(Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1951).
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In Frank Edwards' Strange World (1964), Lyle Stuart, New York (\$4.95), p. 177, the following quotation was found by Joseph L. Hunter, of Tweed, Ontario, Canada, and sent to us:

"In Bradley County, Tennessee, a farmer named J. H. Hooper was intrigued by the peculiar markings on a stone which he found on a hillside of his farm. After pondering this oddity for a while, he began to look for others, and was promptly rewarded; for his search produced several similar flat stones with alphabetical characters on them, and---says the Transcript of the New York Academy of Sciences, (ii-27)--his

digging unearthed a lengthy stone wall which had been buried for a very long time. Hooper carefully cleared away the earth and debris, and could make out many signs and numerals which he was unable to read.

"His notification of local leaders led eventually to their apprising scientists of the discovery. Subsequent investigation disclosed that the wall contained more than eight hundred individual characters cut into the stone. There were moons and stars and geometrical designs. There were also recognizable likenesses of animals. And the New York Academy of Sciences report cautiously adds: 'Accidental imitations of oriental alphabets are numerous.' Since they did not know who had done the work in the first place, their decision that the inclusion of oriental characters was 'accidental' mere adds one mystery to another.

"The wall is there. The characters upon it are there. And the characters were concealed behind a layer of cement! Perhaps the cement, too, was 'accidental'."

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From the same source, p. 176, is this quotation:

"In Sullivan County, Missouri, in 1879, a farmer found what turned out to be an ancient ritual mask made of iron and silver. Since it was far beyond the capabilities or customs of the primitives of the region, it must be regarded as the produce of some earlier or more advanced race. Who were they? What happened to them?"

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Virgil J. Vogel, specialist in American history, associate professor of history at Amundsen-Mayfair College, City Colleges of Chicago, has written an article, "Indian Ways With Farming," which appeared in The American Way (American Airlines Magazine), for July, 1971. This article was sent to us by Major Gary R. Lair, who noted it en route to his new assignment in Vietnam.

Dr. Vogel wrote, "Despite their primitive tools, such as hoes and spades made of stone or bone, Indian farming methods were more sophisticated than is generally supposed. Indians of the American Southwest, Central and South America practiced irrigation. The Hohokam of Arizona dug a system of canals two thousand years ago which are estimated to have irrigated a quarter million acres. Most of the early European contacts with Indians include descriptions of their crops" (p.23). In addition to irrigation, "Indians, such as those in Peru followed the principles of contour farming which have only recently been appreciated in the United States as a measure against erosion. Fertilizing, while not universal, was widely practiced."(p.27

"That corn was of pre-Columbian origin there is no doubt," said Dr. Vogel. "Wellformed ears of corn, some more than four thousand years old, have been found in caves and prehistoric burials from Peru to Illinois" (p.23). He asserts that Indians practiced hybridization and grew every kind of corn, including popcorn.

The Indian contribution to the world food supply, says Dr. Vogel, is one of the best kept secrets of history." He quotes figures (for 1967) on world production of leading food crops which reveal that "41.8% of the total, by weight," is composed of crops first grown by Indians--potatoes, maize, and peanuts. He says, "Of leading food and economic crops produced in the United States in 1969, fully 47.7% by value, consists of crops domesticated by Indians: corn, cotton, beans, peanuts, potatoes, and tobacco" (p. 26).

Dr. Vogel believes, "The Indians have been robbed of just acclaim of their accomplishments by the silence of history books, by misleading nomenclature ('Irish' potatoes, 'Turkish' tobacco), and by the fact that many of their products have been so important in the economy of other lands that their origin is forgotten. The potato . . . the most important vegetable in the world . . . producing more pounds per acre than any other staple . . . in its many varieties, was first cultivated by Indians of the Andean region, from which it spread to Europe, Asia, Africa, and . . . indirectly, to North America; hence the name 'Irish' potatoes" (p. 26).

The article gives, in addition to those already mentioned, an impressive list of foods and other products native to the Americas, produced by Indian tribes in widely different areas. We regret that our newsletter cannot mention them all. We list only these:

Many of our common vegetables and fruits, including the wild grape, from which the Concord grape was developed by Europeans

Nuts of more than 300 varieties

Quite a range of sources for drinks--as guarana, sarsparilla, Mexican vanilla, cacao (from which chocolate is obtained)

Sweet potatoes (not related to potatoes), first cultivated in Mexico

"Hawaiian" pineapples, originated in Central America

Several tuberous roots--one, the "Jerusalem" artichoke was called the "Indian potato"; manioc, or cassava, from which comes tapioca

Also he mentions chicle, the main constituent of modern chewing gum, which he says "bears a Mayan name for the tree sap which they chewed for its flavor" (p. 27).

The United States Department of Agriculture, Dr. Vogel stated, listed 1112 species of plants which furnished food for Indians of the United States and Canada (p. 24).

Other crops to which he referred included:

Tobacco, widely cultivated in North and South America as early as 600 A.D.

Cotton, cultivated in Mexico, Central America, and West Indies

Rubber, manufactured from latex by Indians in South and Central America, and the Caribbean area

In referring to domestication of animals and birds, Dr. Vogel mentions the turkey, which was bred among the Aztecs and the Pueblo tribes; the Peruvian Indians domesticated the Muscovy duck. Some other animals are mentioned, including the fact that the Aztecs also domesticated the honey bee (p.27).

All of this strikes a note of accord where the Book of Mormon is concerned, since Ether's account plainly states that the Jaredites, when migrating to Ancient America, "did carry with them deseret, which by interpretation is a honey bee; and thus they did carry with them swarms of bees, and all manner of that which was upon the face of the land, seeds of every kind" (Ether 1:24). During a period of great prosperity, they wrote of themselves, "They had become exceeding rich, having all manner of fruit, and of grain, and of silks, and of fine linens, and of gold and of silver, and of precious things" (Ether 4:19), and the next two verses describe some of their animals. Ether 4:56 also refers to these same things.

Numerous Nephite records in the Book of Mormon speak of their animal husbandry, horticulture, and industry, such as II Nephi 4:16; Alma 29:32; Helaman 2:130-133.

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The Book of Mormon mentions that the Nephites were skilled in the use of herbs (Alma 21:76). Those interested in the development of medicines by Indians will doubtless find Dr. Virgil J. Vogel's book on this subject helpful. This book is American Indian Medicine (1970), by University of Oklahoma Press, 583 pages, \$12.50.

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Lana Hiemstra, of Odessa, Texas, submitted this item, from Incidents of Travel in Yucatan, by John L. Stephens (1962), University of Oklahoma, p. 185:

"Dr. S.G. Morton of Philadelphia says that the mummies from Peru have the same peculiarities in form of the skull, same delicacy of bones, same smallness of hands and feet, as at San Francisco and elsewhere--from Canada to Patagonia and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. He adds that it affords additional support that, notwithstanding some slight variation in physical conformation and others of a much more remarkable character in intellectual attainments, all the aboriginal Americans of all known epochs belong to the same great and distinctive race."

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We also give credit to Lana Hiemstra for noting the following In Elizabeth P. Benson's The Maya World (1967), Crowell, New York, \$6.95:

"The best of the early Spanish accounts of the Maya is the work of Diego de Landa, who came to Yucatan in 1549 and was later made its first bishop . . . Bishop Landa wrote that, according to some of the old people of Yucatan, their ancestors had said that the land was occupied by a race of people who came from the east by twelve paths that God had opened for them through the 'sea. Landa therefore concluded that these people must be Israelites" (p. 36, 6).

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A memo from Richard P. Howard, R. L. D. S. World Church Historian, supplies this information:

KINGSBOROUGH'S ANTIQUITIES OF MEXICO

Recently we have had a request concerning the location of this (Antiquities of Mexico) set of books. We have recently heard from the Library of Congress that this set is listed as being held by the following libraries:

Academy of Natural Science	(Philadelphia)
*Cleveland Public Library	
Huntington	(San Marino, California)
Illinois State Library	(Springfield)
John Carver Brown	(Providence, Rhode Island)
Peabody Institute	(Baltimore, Maryland)
University of Illinois	(Urbana)
University of Michigan	(Ann Arbor)
University of South Carolina	(Columbia, South Carolina)
Yale University	(New Haven, Connecticut)

*Not certain about this. Libaray of Congress sent only initials of libraries and doubt if we have deciphered this one correctly.

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Ed. Guy, of Kansas City, Kansas, recommended THE KEY, by John Philip Cohane (1969), Crown Publishing Co., \$7.95.

The author, a graduate of Yale, "While working on a book about the Irish . . . kept reencountering certain key words and place-names that looked to him as if they had been brought into Great Britain and Ireland from the Mediterranean in prehistoric times. Moreover, those key words and names seemed to be of Semitic origin." After years of research, Mr. Cohane concluded that "before the Egyptian, Greek, Phoenician, and Carthaginian eras, two major Semitic migrations or dispersions took place, and that they are worldwide in scopeFirst summarizing a number of recent developments in the field of etymology, archaeology, anthropology, and mythology, Mr. Cohane links . . . through . . . key names and words the baffling complex "of certain civilizations, including "the ruined Aztec and Mayan cultures."

The Preface, written by Cyrus H. Gordon, Professor of Mediterranean Studies, Brandeis University, refers to our hemisphere, and answers the general belief that white men did not come to America before Columbus' discovery, by saying, "There is no dearth of facts reflecting the transoceanic contacts of America, from east and west, throughout millennia before Columbus. One of the lines of investigation is the plethora of place-names dotting the globe. Those names reflect important data out of which world history--including the history of pre-Columbian America--will be reconstructed."

The inside cover says, "Mr. Cohane's brilliant unraveling of his clues is as exciting as a detective story, and his findings are so seminal that they may well rank with the major historical theories of the century."

THE KEY (288 pages), contains fifty-four illustrations, gathered from various countries, many of which are from the Americas and related areas, holding special interest for Book of Mormon lovers.

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Roy E. Weldon believes Book of Mormon researchers will find National Geographic Magazine, July, 1944 of particular interest because of articles on the "Sun Dance", and "Dogs" (wolf-like). Also this issue contained an excellent map on astronomy.

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National Geographic Magazine issued a map on "Archaeological Middle America, Land of the Feathered Serpent," which we are pleased to recommend. One interested should write for Supplement to National Geographic, October, 1968, Vol. 134, No. 4--MIDDLE AMERICA. Address The National Geographic Society, Dept. 87, Washington, D.C. 20036. Cost: 50¢, plus 10¢ postage and handling.

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The research contributions by those who have been alert to items possibly related to the Book of Mormon are greatly appreciated. These contributions make our newsletters possible. Interest in these newsletters grows. Please pass this copy on to a friend when you are through with it, or if you wish his name added (free) to our mailing list, just send his name and address (including zip code), to the chairman (name and address as shown on the heading of this letter).

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