



FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH ON ANCIENT AMERICA

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

NEWSLETTER No. 16

November 30, 1973

Dear Members and Friends:

Working toward our goal of promotion of the Book of Mormon in Latin America, the Foundation has financed the purchase of considerable visual aid and sound equipment for the use of Clair E. Weldon, material director in Latin America, and for those working under his direction. This of course is with a view to opening opportunities for the spread of the gospel and the furtherance of the use of the Book of Mormon in Latin America, according to our aim.

We are pleased to announce a new member on our board of directors, Richard A. DeLong, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biology at Graceland College. Having completed his Ph.D. degree in fishery biology at Colorado State University on October 19, 1973, Brother DeLong states, "I am now free to devote more time to my strongest avocational interest, Book of Mormon archaeology." Hence, he readily accepted our request that he serve as one of our directors. We believe that he brings much promise to our organization.

As always, you are invited to further the use of the Book of Mormon through your own research, and to help others to do so also. We trust that some of the items included in this newsletter will prompt your reading of the texts cited and similar texts, going into unlimited areas of study in promotion of the Book of Mormon. A list of suggested topics for research will be sent you free on request.

If you wish the name of some interested friend added to our mailing list for these newsletters, please let us know. All that is required is the name, address and zip code. The letters are free.

--T.D.S.

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HIGHWAYS

The Book of Mormon, published in 1830, describes the rise and fall of civilizations in Ancient America. Long before the learned world was aware of the former existence of these peoples, the Book of Mormon gave scores of details about them, including their highways. One such statement is : "And it came to pass that there were many cities built anew, and there were many old cities repaired, and there were many

highways built up, and many roads made, which led from city to city, and from land to land, and from place to place" (III Nephi 3:8).

With the unearthing of the works of these ancient people, there have been discoveries of remains of remarkable roadways. William Prescott, after mentioning their "temples, palaces, fortresses, terraced mountains," says that perhaps the most remarkable works are their "great roads, the broken remains of which are still in sufficient preservation to attest their former magnificence.... One of these roads passed over the grand plateau . . . galleries were cut for leagues through the living rock, rivers were crossed by bridges that swung suspended in the air, precipices were scaled by stairways hewn out of the native bed, ravines of hideous depths were filled up with solid masonry; in short all the difficulties that beset a wild and mountainous region, and which might appall the most courageous engineer of modern times, were encountered and successfully overcome" (Conquest of Peru, David McKay, 1847, Vol. 1, p. 84, 85, 87).

Hubert Herring's A History of Latin America (Alfred A. Knopf, N. Y., 1955), p. 54, contributes this: "The Empire was bound together by two systems of roads. One followed the highlands from southern Colombia to northern Argentina, and a parallel road lay along the coast from northern Peru to the Río Maule in Chile. These roads were supplemented by transverse roads. . . . These roads were soundly built, often paved and lined with adobe walls, with frequent causeways. Suspension bridges of fiber ropes swung over ravines and canyons, spans of four to five hundred feet. It is probable that travel in the Inca Empire of the fifteenth century was equal in comfort to that of contemporary western Europe."

Victor Wolfgang von Hagen, in his book The Incas (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1963) p. 138, says "The distance of the Royal Road from Angasmayo (Colombia) to the Maule River in Chile is 3,250 miles In the memory of people I doubt there is record of another highway comparable to this, running through deep valleys and over high mountains, through piles of snow, quagmires, living rock, along turbulent rivers; in some places it ran smooth and paved, carefully laid out; in others over sierras, cut through the rock, with walls skirting the rivers, and steps and rests through the snow. . . . The road built by the Romans that runs through Spain and the others we read of were as nothing in comparison to this."

South of Yesterday, by Gregory Mason (Henry Holt and Company, N. Y., 1940), beginning at page 20, pictures stone roads in Yucatan, pictures taken from the air, of which Mr Gregory states: "Few recent discoveries give us such an appreciation of the immense power and glory of the Maya civilization as those great raised roadways, radiating out of Cuba" (p. 59).

"Saches, raised stone roads, are one of the most remarkable features of Maya culture and, indeed, of all American Indian culture. They are found in abundance in northern and eastern Yucatan. . . . The roads of the Romans are famous for their excellence, but the roads of the Mayas were broader and were built more durably" (p. 77).

Some facts concerning ancient highways in the area of Cobá, Yucatan, are to be found in Eric R. Wolf's Sons of the Shaking Earth (Chicago University, 1966), p. 101:

"Cobá . . . lies amidst five small lakes, the largest of which is a mile long. Sixteen known causeways, each 15 feet wide, connected the town itself with outlying centers. The longest, over 60 miles long, linked Cobá with Yaxuna, not far from Chichén Itzá."

Edward Herbert Thompson, in his People of the Serpent (Capricorn Books, N. Y., 1960), p. 173, 174, says: "The Mayas, like the Romans, were finished builders of roads. In the days of their greatness, macadamized roads, raised from six to eight feet above the ordinary level of the country and surfaced with hard, smooth cement, led from palace terrace to temple, from temple centre to temple centre. Such highways radiated from Chichen Itza toward all the other great centers of population. From Coba a road led all the way across the peninsula to the coast at Cozumel which was a sacred place with the ancients and contained many shrines. Pilgrimages thither were conducted from all parts of Yucatan. I have described these macadamized roads, and the term is appropriate for the Mayas a thousand years ago built their highways on practically the same principle as McAdam adopted in the nineteenth century."

Another writer, Thomas William Gann, in Ancient Cities and Modern Tribes (London, Duckworth, 1926, p. 114), said: Roman roads, proverbial for their permanence, have disappeared, and can be traced today only with difficulty, or not at all. Our modern roads will, if left to the forces of nature, have completely disappeared, without leaving a trace in 500 years, but this great Maya road has withstood the passage of centuries, in a country of heavy rainfall and luxuriant vegetation, and with the exception of its cement facing, is almost the same now as it was the day when the last Maya trod its smooth level surface."

Roy E. Weldon bears personal testimony of his own observance of these Yucatan roads as a member of a party of four on expedition to Yucatan in 1953. He tells of conferring with a young archaeologist in Merida who walked along the highway for twenty-two miles with a compass and found the entire distance to be as straight as an arrow.

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ANTIGENS

Newsweek, November 13, 1972, p. 101, carried a stimulating article regarding a relatively new area of research, that of antigens, discovered

some seven or eight years ago. Antigens are now used in tissue-typing, which "play a vital role in the body's recognition and rejection of foreign tissues, such as transplanted organs. Antigens stimulate the production of the blood proteins known as antibodies, though just how antigens work remains unclear." However, specialists, when doing transplants, do their best to match the antigens of potential donors and recipients of organs. Researchers have now identified some 30 different members of the most common class of antigens and have determined that each individual possesses four of these 30.

Anthropologists have also been working by methods similar to those used by transplant teams, undertaking statistical surveys of the frequency at which the 30 antigens occur in various population groups. Their studies have revealed what they term "antigen profiles," which are explained as specific antigens which occur much more frequently in Caucasians, for example, than in Negroid peoples. The article states that "antigen profiles are clearest in populations that have been historically isolated, such as Eskimos, nations of New Guinea, and all of the American Indian tribes tested so far. The American Indians are of special interest to the medical anthropologists because of the light that further research on them is expected to throw on the movement of early peoples from Asia to the North American continent."

Dr. Peter Stastny of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School was the first to report success in identifying antigens in mummies. By using shredded tissue from mummies, rather than the conventional tissue-typing technique that relies on blood samples, Dr. Stastny has applied this method to 35 samples of mummies from Peru, between 1,000 and 2,000 years old, and reported that he has identified their antigens. He said that none of the samples had more than four antigens, and that their "antigen profiles" appeared "very similar to that of present-day American Indians--a resemblance that agrees with archaeological information on the inhabitants of Peru in pre-Inca times."

Dr. Stastnay, the article says, "is planning to tissue-type specimens from Egyptian mummies--an endeavor that may go some way to settling the dispute over whether or not Egyptians settled in Central and South America."

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BEES

The United States Department of Agriculture claims there were no honeybees here at the time of the arrival of Europeans except the stingless bees found in the American tropics. These bees only produce honey in a form which has no practical use--they store their honey in globules instead of combs. This opinion by the USDA is refuted by authority quoted below.

Alma Reed's book, The Ancient Past of Mexico, New York, Crown

(1966), p. 108, states that Cortez, after his arrival in Mexico, wrote Charles II that he had seen "various kinds of honey and honey combs of the bees."

In Native Races, H. H. Bancroft says that multitudes of bees were kept for their honey and wax, and hives are mentioned (Vol. 2, p. 722).

In an article, "Beekeeping in early America" by J. H. Wilder of Waycross, Ga., which appeared in The Beekeeper's Item for November, 1943, the author said, "It is not enough to say that America never had a native honey bee until all history has been searched. DeSoto, our very first explorer, found honey here and enjoyed it with the native Indians, according to Kephart's history. This takes us back to within twenty-seven years after the discovery of our country, which was 1513. DeSoto explored mostly during the years 1539-1542."

Mr. Wilder also referred to other explorers, pioneers, and historians, and quoted Judge Felix E. Alley in his history, Random Thoughts and the Musing of a Mountaineer (p. 259): "The woods (in the North Carolina mountains) were full of bear, racoons, and squirrels, fattened on chestnuts and hickory nuts; the rippling streams were alive with trout and fish of other kinds; and the land was fairly sweetened with honey for wild bees swarmed through the forest as thick as mosquitoes in the swamps of Florida."

Mr. Wilder continued by saying that through centuries bees "have been hunted, found and destroyed by both white and the red men, and honey has most of the time been the only known sweet. . . . Back in Daniel Boone's day and other explorers' time, the amount of bees and honey must have been enormous. **Honey was not only the most known sweet, but the main source of food, when other food was scarce and hard to obtain.** Maybe it matters but little one way or the other whether America had a native honey bee or not, but the fact remains that we did. This is substantiated by our earliest historians, explorers, and pioneers."

All of this substantiates the Book of Mormon statement in Ether 1:24, which records that the Jaredites brought with them when they came to this land "deseret, which, by interpretation is a honey bee; and thus they did carry with them swarms of bees."

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In a discussion of politics on the part of the American Indian, James E. Officer, writing in the March 1972 issue of The American Way, makes some observations as to the growing influence which American Indians are exerting on the Federal Government, and then makes these significant statements:

"Contrary to popular opinion, Indian tribes never have had hereditary leaders and seldom permitted individuals complete authority for decision

making. Many of the so-called 'chiefs' who signed treaties on behalf of their tribes were self-appointed. Some are still looked upon as traitors to their people and a few were put to death for their actions. Instead, members sought decision by consensus, or even by unanimity. When individuals occasionally were given great authority, it was because of their unusual skills at curing, hunting or warfare, and their authority was limited to the particular situation and time.

"Tribes usually accord high prestige to the tribal chairman, who may also be called 'President' or 'Governor.' They expect him to deal effectively with the outside world, especially the federal government, in obtaining benefits for tribal members; and, if he fails, his tenure is likely to be short. Some tribes elect a new chairman nearly every term. Tribal chairmen may be elected by popular vote, or by the tribal governing body's membership. In the latter cases, his authority is likely to be limited." --The American Way, Inflight Magazine, by American Airlines, N. Y., March 1972, p. 26.

It was the counsel of Mosiah II that they should conduct their business by the voice and vote of the people, even in the matter of leadership. "Therefore choose you by the voice of this people, judges, that ye may be judged according to the laws which have been given you by our fathers, which are correct, and which were given them by the hand of the Lord. Now it is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right; but it is common for the lesser part of the people to desire that which is not right; therefore this shall ye observe, and make it your law to do your business by the voice of the people. . . . And now if ye have judges, and they do not judge you according to the law which has been given, ye can cause that they may be judged by a higher judge; if your higher judges do not judge righteous judgments, ye shall cause that a small number of your lower judges should be gathered together, and they shall judge your higher judges, according to the voice of the people." --Mosiah

13:34-40

It is quite possible that traditions handed down from Nephite times still influence Indian methods of self-government.

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on Ancient America

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