



FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH ON ANCIENT AMERICA

THELONA D. STEVENS, CHAIRMAN / 202 SOUTH PENDLETON AVE. / INDEPENDENCE, MO. 64050

NEWSLETTER No. 18

June 3, 1974

Dear Members and Friends:

It was a pleasure indeed to renew many friendships at the Foundation's Conference ~~meeting~~ April 4 and to ~~meet~~ others of you for the first time on this occasion.

There seemed total accord in the evaluation of our ~~meeting~~, that it was very worthwhile and good to have been present. The speaker was Elder Dana Simmons, of Brownsville, Texas. His interest in the Book of Mormon undoubtedly stems from being a son of Wayne and Verneil Simmons. He took his B. A. degree in anthropology at the University of the Americas in Puebla, Mexico. He talked about the migration of the Jaredites and the route which he believes they followed from Sumer to ancient America, and their possible principal areas of development in the New World. His easy manner of presentation stimulated audience participation and it was with reluctance that the ~~meeting~~ was closed.

There was also general acclaim over the Foundation's annual ~~meeting~~, held February 10 at the Stone Church, when Brother Charles R. Hield, known and loved by so many, spoke on "Jesus Christ, Specialist." He testified as to the divinity of Christ as verified in the Book of Mormon. Repeatedly among those present after the ~~meeting~~ we heard ~~comment~~ that this was surely one of Brother Hield's most powerful presentations.

At the annual ~~meeting~~ the ~~same~~ officers were re-elected to serve you another year: Thelona Stevens, chairman, Stuart Wight, vice-chairman, Frances Davidson, treasurer, Linda Baker, secretary. Audrey Stubbart remains as manuscript chairman, but Leta Moriarty has accepted the responsibility of publicity chairman.

Development of a library, with emphasis of course on books and periodicals pertaining to our particular field of interest, is to be a major project of the Foundation. We have missed offers of some very fine collections of books because we had no definite space in which to acquire a library. This difficulty has now been overcome through the generosity of Zionie Research Institute, Inc., Stuart Wight, President. Bookshelves are being installed, and we now announce that we are anticipating receipt of whatever volumes you may wish to contribute. These may be either old books or recent publications--used or new copies.

Names of donors will be placed in each book contributed. The address of Zion's Research Institute, Inc., is 815 W. Maple, Independence, Missouri, 64050, to which gifts may be sent, or you may send them to your chairman at the Foundation address, as above.

Already some gift books have been received for our library. Some months ago we received a copy of the Book of Mormon in the Korean language, through the courtesy of Phillip M. Caswell, appointee in Seoul, Korea. Then at our Conference meeting Sister Anna McLennan Rieske, in authentic Chinese costume, told of how it came about that she had a part in converting and encouraging some who had a major part in producing this edition of the Book of Mormon.

Thank you all who are giving us material assistance by sending in your membership fees. This is appreciated very much. However, we still remind you that we gladly send the Newsletter regardless.

Again we invite you to send us the names and addresses (including zip code, please), of friends you know who would be interested in receiving these Newsletters. We shall gladly add their names to our free mailing list.

--T.D.S.

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ANCIENT AMERICAN FORTIFICATIONS

There are countless times in the Book of Mormon when mention is made of building walled fortifications and walled cities. One example is Alma 24:56, "And thus they did cause the Lamanites to labor, until they had encircled the city of Bountiful roundabout with a strong wall of timbers and earth to an exceeding height."

Hiram Bingham, in an account in National Geographic Magazine,¹ described the defenses for Machu Picchu in Peru, stating that the secondary, or inner wall, was fifteen to twenty feet high and that the town was invulnerable. He also stated that there is a steep dry moat outside the wall of Machu Picchu. J. Eric Thompson has also described a moat ten to eighty feet wide and seven to thirteen feet deep, which he says was an artificial moat surrounding Becan, Maya city in Campeche. This was found by the 1934 Carnegie expedition.² M. Wells Jakeman claims that the walled city of Mayapan, Yucatan contained sixty thousand dwellings within the walls.³

Roy E. Weldon says that he and his party have visited and photographed portions of the walls still standing in places to twenty feet high that once surrounded the twelve-square-mile city of Chan Chan in Peru. Also, that they have visited and photographed the remote ruins of Giengola in central America where three walls surround the mountain-top city that few white men have ever visited. Other Maya ruins which they visited and photographed were those at Tulum, another walled city.

Of Tulum and other walled cities, Gregory Mason wrote,⁴ "The east coast of Yucatan already had been known for the presence of walled cities. The most famous among them is Tulum, which has been well advertised since Stephens described it in 1843. An expedition of the Carnegie Institution led by Dr. Lothrop found the walled city of Zelha, some twenty miles northeast of Tulum. About eleven miles northeast of Zelha, Spinden and I found the walled cities of Zparet."

Roy Weldon added, "It appears that hundreds of years later the Mayans were still using the same type of fortifications described in the Book of Mormon. On his famous journey from Mexico City to Honduras in 1524-1525 A.D., Cortez passed through Indian towns in the Mayan area of which Joseph Smith could scarcely have had any knowledge." Speaking of these towns, E. Wyllys Andrews wrote, "All villages mentioned were surrounded by a deep moat, a high stockade of cut poles, and defensive towers of wood."⁵

The Book of Mormon describes their building of walls and moats in unmistakable language: "The Lamanites could not get into their forts of security, by any other way save by the entrance, because of the highness of the bank which had been thrown up, and the depth of the ditch which had been dug round about, save it were by the entrance." (Alma 21:170). Alma tells of fortifications erected by their great general Moroni, "Yea, he had been . . . erecting small forts . . . and also building walls of stone to encircle them about, round about their cities and the borders of their lands" (verse 129).

There are many evidences of early American fortifications in Guatemala. According to Edward Selser, "The fortifications skillfully constructed by the inhabitants of this territory prove that they had to protect themselves against constant hostile disturbances."⁶

And from the writings of H. H. Bancroft comes this: "Extending eastward from the region of Hue Hue Tenango to that of Salama in the province of Vera Paz, a distance of nearly one hundred miles, there seems to be a line of ruins occurring at frequent intervals, particularly in the valley of Rabinai and about the town of the same name. A map of Guatemala now before me locates seventeen of these ruins . . . most of them being the remains of fortresses or fortified towns, built on strong natural positions at rivers' mouths, guarding the entrance to fertile valleys."⁷

Other fortifications have been found in Latin America: "One of the most celebrated structures built for defense was the stone wall erected by Tlascaltecs to secure themselves from the incursions of the Mexicans. This wall was six miles long, extending across a valley from one mountain to another; it was nearly nine feet high and twenty feet thick, surmounted along the whole length by a breastwork that enabled its defenders to fight in comparative security from the top. There was only

one entrance about ten paces wide, where one part of the wall overlapped the other in curcilinear form in the manner of a ravelin for a distance of about forty paces."⁸

In The Epic of Latin America, John A. Crow, after speaking of some mighty monuments of Inca architecture, spoke of other even greater ruins, "many built and superimposed on even more ancient remains." Speaking of Cuzco, he said, "At the north of the city, situated on a hill seven hundred and sixty feet above it, lies the colossal fortress of Sacsahuaman, its protective walls rising in successive terraces above the valley below. The first wall, constructed of gigantic blue-gray stones, is half a mile long, and was once twenty-five to thirty feet high. One of its stones measures twenty-six by fourteen by twelve feet. Thirty-five feet back of this rampart is another wall eighteen feet high, and eighteen feet behind this is still a third, fourteen feet in height. The cyclopean masonry of this fortress is unique in the world. . . . There were three more mammoth fortresses guarding its approaches: Pisac, Ollantaytambo, and Machi Picchu, each of them a memorable architectural monument in its own right. . . . These three megalithic fortresses were not originally conceived by the Incas, but by their predecessors."⁹

Paul M. Hanson made comment on the fortress of Sacsahuaman in his book, Jesus Christ Among the Ancient Americans,¹⁰ and also he quoted Hiram Bingham as saying that the ancient builders of Sacsahuaman constructed three great terraces, "which extend one above another for a third of a mile across the hill between two deep gulches. The lowest terrace of the 'fortress' is faced with colossal boulders, many of which weigh ten tons and some weigh more than twenty tons, yet all are fitted together with the utmost precision."¹¹ The Book of Mormon quotes Isaiah, "We will build with hewn stones" (II Nephi 9:70).

THE GREAT WALL OF PERU

Moroni's fortifications are described in Alma 22:8-14 as "the line between the Nephites and the Lamanites, between the land of Zarahemla and the land of Nephi; from the west sea, running by the head of the river Sidon" (verse 11).

It should be a matter of more than passing interest that one hundred and three years after the Book of Mormon was published, the world should be amazed by the discovery of a great prehistoric Maginot line in America. Mr. Robert Shippie, aviator-archaeologist for the National Geographic Magazine, discovered the Great Wall of Peru in 1933. This wall runs from the Pacific Ocean (west sea), running by the head of the Santa River.¹² In the National Geographic Magazine for January 1933 are several pictures of this great wall which runs unbroken for forty miles at one place. It is notable that the great wall of Peru runs from the

Pacific Ocean by the head or delta of the River Santa. This wall may or may not be the wall referred to in Alma 22:8-14, as much exploration needs to be done and other great walled fortified lines may be found. The significant thing is that the Book of Mormon describes a fortified line one hundred years before such a wall was discovered.

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 2. Thompson, J. Eric, The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1934, p. 106.
 3. Jakeman, M. Wells, The Origin and History of the Mayas, Part I, Research Publishing Company, Los Angeles, 1945, p. 96.
 4. Mason, Gregory, South of Yesterday, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1940, p. 83.
 5. Andrews, E. Wyllys, "The Archaeology of Southwestern Campeche," Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C. Bulletin No. 546, 1945, p. 25.
 6. Seler, Edward, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin No. 28, p. 80.
 7. Bancroft, Hubert H., Native Races of the Pacific States, San Francisco, 1883-86, Vol. 2, p. 416.
 8. Ibid., Vol. 4, pp. 130, 131.
 9. Crow, John A., The Epic of Latin America, Doubleday, New York, 1971, pp. 34, 35.
 10. Hanson, Paul M., Jesus Christ Among the Ancient Americans, Herald Publishing House, Independence, Missouri, 1945, p. 133.
 11. Bingham, Hiram, Inca Land, Houghton Mifflin Co., New York, 1922, p. 165.
 12. Shippie, Robert, "Air Adventures in Peru," National Geographic Magazine, January 1933.

Material by Roy E. Weldon and F. Edward Butterworth in preparation for publication has furnished the basis for this portion of this newsletter.

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The following was contributed by Frances M. Mills, of Independence, Missouri.

THE ASTRONOMICAL RECORD IN CHACO CANYON

A scientific group has added to what they call mounting evidence that the Indians who occupied Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, from A.D. 700 to 1200, had a sophisticated understanding of elementary astronomy.

In August 1972 Ray A. Williamson, Howard J. Fisher and Abigail F. Williamson of St. John's College in Annapolis, Md., and Clarion Cochran of Chaco Canyon National Monument measured the alignment of three large kivas. They found that walls of two of the kivas, known as Pueblo Bonita A and

Casa Rinconada, were accurately aligned in a north-south direction. They believe the Indians used either solar or stellar observations to achieve this alignment. (Polaris was not at its present position as a pole star when the kivas were occupied and thus other techniques would have been necessary to find north.)

In a survey of the mesa tops north and east of the two sites the group discovered perpendicular directional markings cut into the rock. Both markings are aligned so that they would point to the position on the horizon at which the sun would rise on the day of winter solstice. The inference is that they were intentionally carved solstice markers. "The mesa east of Casa Rinconada seems to be a kind of observatory of the sun," says Williamson.

COMETS, NOVAS AND THE MAYANS

Did the Mayans record novas and comets? Hubert E. Harber of Westchester State College in Pennsylvania has studied a particular Mayan hieroglyph in a search for the answer. It seemed promising because 20 Mayan dates were associated with the glyph, and it seemed to indicate something about astronomy. But comparing dates of known historic novas and comets with the Mayan dates, he found no acceptable correlation. Nevertheless he believes that the Mayans probably did record such events and that a record will eventually be found.

(From the AAAS meeting on Science and Man in the Americas in Mexico City. Page 423, of the June 30, 1973 issue of Science News Magazine, Vol. 103, No. 26, published by Science Service, Inc., 1719 N St., N.W., Washington D.C. 20036.)

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