Foundation for Research
on
Ancient
America

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

NEWSLETTER NO. 36 January 14, 1981

Dear Members and Friends,

The annual meeting of the Foundation for Research on Ancient America will be held at 3:00 o'clock January 25, 1981 in the usual place--Partridge Hall of the Stone Church. Featured at the meeting will be a slide presentation by High Priest Charles R. Hield, "Jesus Christ in Latin America", and Patriarch Roy E. Weldon presenting "The Book of Mormon; a marvelous work and a wonder". There will be a brief business session, including the election of officers.

Early last year FRAA was pleased to announce that membership cards would be issued because the value of a membership card for identification is obvious, but in addition, we have found that to be identified with our Foundation carries considerable weight when visiting a museum, library, or other institution which requires some special service. Just being able to present a membership card is an easy, and we believe an impressive, means of identifying our members.

For the first time our membership cards were available for presentation to members who attended our World Conference program series last April. Many cards were issued at that time, and since then we have sought to send cards to both our long-standing members and those who have newly joined our ranks. If somehow you have not received your card, please write to Fred Weddle, 410 N. Pleasant, Independence, MO 64050.

If you are really serious about wanting to receive your newsletters, you must be certain that we have your current address. Otherwise, there is mutual disappointment --you do not get your copy and we are out the work and expense of sending it to you. Do keep us in mind when you change your address.

--T.D.S.

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This is the conclusion of Audrey Stubbart's review of BEFORE COLUMBUS. (The first part appeared in FRAA Newsletter No. 35, September 1980.)

BEFORE COLUMBUS
The New History of Celtic, Egyptian, Phoenician, Viking, Black African, and Asian Contacts and Impacts in the Americas Before 1492
By Dr. Samuel D. Marble
Published by A. S. Barnes and Co., Inc. 1980

MAYAN MATHEMATICS

The achievement of Mayan astronomy would not have been possible without a system of mathematics which permitted the rapid calculation of very large numbers. Constance Irwin believes that "the Phoenicians conveyed these important mathematical prodedures to the Olmecs after first having acquired them from the Babylonians," but Peter

Tompkins is equally certain that this information probably grew out of collaboration with the Egyptians. "While the Mayans appear to have borrowed heavily from the Egyptians and the Phoenicians in both mathematics and astronomy," Dr. Marble believes that their intellectual accomplishment "might have been a natural evolution of the thoughts of native Indians on their own." He says that their accomplishments in "architecture, economy, social structures, agriculture, and religion . . . without going through the trial-and-error process as did the Egyptians in perfecting their concept of the pyramid, leaves us breathless with wonder. How the Mayans organized their agencies of discovery, their channels of transmission, their hierarchy or learning to achieve such a profound breakthrough in knowledge requires some explanation."

Although the Mayans continued to advance in the sciences, "nowhere is their achievement more splendid than in mathematics, which apparently was taught to and understood by the population in general. Cortes' soldiers were amazed at the speed with which merchants were able to make calculations. They were awed to discover that in the sale of products, merchandisers calculated the cost of beans not by the peck or bushel, but by the bean." The Mayan mathematical system was so simple "that a child of four could learn how to multiply, divide and obtain square roots without going through the previous task of learning the multiplication tables." It has striking similarities to Boolian algebra which provided the mathematical tools Norbert Weiner needed to develop the computer.

The system is so "flexible and so easy to use it should be given a trial run as an instruction method in some contemporary American school," Dr. Marble believes. Three symbols which are needed to be learned are:

dot or . = 1
dash or - 5
shell or o = 0

The brilliance of Mayan mathematics and astronomy is recognized by scholars as surpassing achievement in Europe or America prior to this century, according to Marble.

EGYPTIAN AND ANCIENT AMERICAN PYRAMIDS

Dr. Marble likens time being divided into quarters with measurement of circles based on 360 degrees but says we have no explanation today as to why the figure 360 was chosen. He suggests the circle of 360 degrees being divided into 60 minutes and the minutes into seconds as being comparable to the division of the hour unit into similar 60 minutes and 60 seconds as a measurement of time and space--"precisely the unit that was used in building the Pyramid of Cheops and the Pyramid of the Sun in Mexico."

Egyptian pyramid building developed from 2900-2700 B.C., says Marble, during which period "astronomers, architects, stone cutters, and masons" experimented with other necessary requirements, such as proper slopes, dimensions of the base, the unit of measurement, and other factors. Observation and careful recording of all this data by astronomers over several centuries made possible the assembling of all the information needed before it was recognized that even hair-breadth inaccuracies meant failure. When this was fully comprehended, the Pyramid of Cheops was constructed, ending their pyramid building period.

In the light of the Egyptian method of development of knowledge for building pyramids, how did it happen that the Mayans were able to jump so many intermediate levels and proceed directly to a level of growth that Mediterranean and European people were able to achieve only after groping for up to thousands of years, Marble asks. He wants to know, "Why did it happen in a relatively limited geographical area on the Caribbean and not among the other and older Indian tribes that carried the same genetic stock?"

The Pyramid Cheops was not a burial site as some thought, but was for a demonstration of "achievement of Egyptian astronomy, architecture, surveying and mathematics." About A.D. 813 a young Arab king hired a small army of stone cutters and managed to force his way into what is now known as "The King's Chamber," which had never before been opened. He found only one object--a solid piece of chocolate granite containing granules of feldspar, quartz and mica. "There was no stone like it in Egypt, nor for that matter is there any evidence that comparable stone can be found in America," Marble says. The Scientific American rejects the idea that the work on the Pyramid Cheops was done by slave labor, because on the back side of many of the 250 million stones found appear "messages of encouragement, rivalry, jest, and homely humor--hardly an evidence of slavery and depression."

Peter Tompkins, a specialist in the mathematical precision and perfection of the pyramids of Egypt, has made comparable studies of the pyramids in Mexico, particularly the Pyramid of the Sun and other structures built in Teotihuacan. Marble quotes him as saying, "While the Great Pyramid at Cheops in Egypt has been an object of admiration and speculation for centuries, it was not until 1925 that the precise base of the pyramid was established. That base has now been measured to the millimeter and it is precisely 500 cubits, or 750 Egyptian geographic feet. This distance, . . . is exactly the distance traveled by the earth at the equator in half a second of time, there being precisely 86,400 seconds in one twenty-four-day, and 86,400 cubits in the circumference of the earth."

According to Marble, in 1972, an American engineer, Hugh Harleston, Jr., decided to build a mathematic model of the center of the city of Teotihuacan. Beginning with the Pyramid of the Sun at the center of Teotihuacan, he began his search for the mathematic logic of the city, seeking to learn the relation, if any, it had to other mathematic systems known to have existed in previous eras of time. Harleston's starting place was the measurement of the base of the Pyramid of the Sun, but "One corner of the pyramid had been ripped away by a nineteenth century excavator who was convinced that the pyramid contained great wealth comparable to Egyptian tombs. He found nothing, but he destroyed an important point in calculating the pyramid's base. Thus far, only one corner of the pyramid has been located with precision." Aerial photography was used to observe the sun's path at its zenith. Harleston, allowing for some latitude, concluded that "the base of the Pyramid of the Sun is 500 cubits per side, a perfect square, and this corresponds exactly with the base of the Pyramid of Cheops."

Then Marble repeated his earlier premise: "It was only the Egyptian cubit on which all measurements came out precisely, and it was the only unit for level, heights, distances, ratios, and square roots that worked with invariable accuracy." He followed this with a strong statement of decided interest to Book of Mormon students: "Furthermore, the application of this unit of measurement shows that it has been used in Yucatan for all pyramids, temples, and courts from approximately 300 B.C. until the invasion of Cortes."

Harleston claimed that "Teotihuacan had been designed as a celestial clock, as an astronomical observatory, as a geodesic point for the survey of the country of which this city was capital." Marble agrees that it is apparent from the square of the pyramids that they were observatory, or "celestial clocks," showing that the early people also had a sense of time and the course of events. One wonders what great event they were expecting.

We repeat, this book by Dr. Marble stirs profound thoughts in our hearts and stimulates desires for more knowledge of possible connections between the Eastern and the Western Hemispheres beyond what is generally known through the Book of Mormon and other limited sources.

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This comes to us from Brother Gordon W. Harrison, of Sharon, Pennsylvania:

There is an incident told in Alma 14, page 393, of the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi taking their swords and all their weapons which were used for the shedding of man's blood and burying them deep in the earth. They made a covenant with God that they would never again shed the blood of man.

It is an unlikely story, isn't it? So unlikely, in fact, that I would be willing almost to wager that there is only one other place in all this world that such a story as that can be found. That is in Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha."

I had a little of "Hiawatha" in high school. About all I could remember of it was their God Gitche Manito, Nokomis and the shores of Gitche Gumee, Hiawatha's birch bark canoe and Minnehaha. I had never read all of the poem but I liked what I read so well that I could not forget it. Many years later, after I had become a member of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and had become familiar with the Book of Mormon, thoughts of Hiawatha came back to me and I inquired about it at the library. I took home a book of Longfellow's poems with "The Song of Hiawatha" in it.

I began reading, without the slightest idea of what I was going to find. I had not read very far before I discovered that I was receiving one of the greatest surprises of my life, for I was actually reading a short version of much of the Book of Mormon. With poetic license, Longfellow tells what the Indians believed in the way of legends and traditions as they were handed down through the ages, and of the things that had happene in the lives of their forefathers in the long ago.

They believed in God who was their Creator and Master of Life. It was he who gave them everything. Hiawatha was their prophet and teacher and deliverer. He had a wondrous birth and being, much different from anyone else's. In the first chapter God calls all the Indian tribes together and reprimands them for their fighting. He commands them to be at peace with one another and to live together as brothers, and counsels them in these words:

"I will send a Prophet to you,
A Deliverer of the nations,
Who shall guide you and shall teach you,
Who shall toil and suffer with you.
If you listen to his counsels,
You will multiply and prosper;
If his warnings pass unheeded,
You will fade away and perish!"

He commanded them to bathe in the stream before them and wash themselves clean, which they did. This referred, no doubt, to their baptism, as it was remembered. God commanded them at the same time to bury their war-clubs and weapons (so like the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi):

Then upon the ground the warriors
Threw their cloaks and shirts of deer-skin,
Threw their weapons and their war-gear,
Leaped into the rushing river,
Washed the war-paint from their faces.
Clear above them flowed the water,
Clear and limpid from the footprints
Of the Master of Life descending;
Dark below them flowed the water,
Soiled and stained with streaks of crimson,
As if blood were mingled with it!

If we could see the water after our baptism, as God sees it, maybe it would look that way, too.

From the river came the warriors,
Clean and washed from all their war-paint;
On the banks their clubs they buried,
Buried all their warlike weapons.
Gitche Manito, the mighty,
The Great Spirit, the creator,
Smiled upon his helpless children!

Where else can you read a story like that except in the Book of Mormon? And about the same people!

I suggest that you read "The Song of Hiawatha" studiously. You will find many things in it similar to the Book of Mormon. Longfellow waid he got these legends and traditions from the Indians and he published his poem in 1855. Joseph Smith got his record from God and published it in 1830.

Longfellow's poem, Chapter 5, tells about Hiawatha's prayer and fasting. Chapter 6 tells about the singer, singing of death, and life undying, in the land of the Hereafter. So the Indians knew about that. Chapter 13 says, "Buried was the bloody hatchet," and "the dreadful war-club," and all the "warlike weapons." The warcry was forgotten and there was peace among the nations. They went about their hunting and their possessions were unmolested. Was this the "Golden Age" of the Nephites?

There are too many similarities in these two stories, about the same people, to be just a coincidence. Don't you think so, too?

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Norma Anne Holik sent us an excerpt from the Smithsonian, February 1979, in which appears the picture of a baked clay tablet. The tablet is identified as having belonged to Chief Joseph, slain leader of the Nez Perce Indians in the Battle of the Big Hole, Montana. The tablet bears a cuneiform inscription which says, " Nalu received 1 lamb from Abbashga on the 11th day of the month of the festival of An, in the year Enmah-galanna was installed as high priestess of Nanna."

This, according to Professor Robert Biggs of the University of Chicago, is a common type of tablet from a southern Iraq site called Drehem, a livestock center 4,000 years ago, where this kind of transaction took place all the time. "An" was a god; "Nanna" was the moon god. The receipt was written in the fourth year of the king Amar-Sin, which makes it about 2042 B.C.

There is a mystery about this archaeological item because apparently this little tablet was one of the personal belongings of Chief Joseph sent to Joseph J. Snyder, anthropology editor of the National Park Service for display at Big Hole National Battlefield. Accompanying the tablet was a card which identified it as a Nez Perce "pictograph" brought from Fort Keogh, Montana in 1878 or 1879 by C. S. Heintzelman, an army officer, who had fought in the Nez Perce War. Heintzelman's son donated the tablet to the museum at West Point.

The editor of Smithsonian raises some questions and suggests some theories, such as:

If the tablet really belonged to Chief Joseph, how did he get it? Did some missionary or tourist present it to him? That might make sense, because Joseph was such an admired warrior after the bloodshed was over, but the theory is confusing because Professor Biggs says that such tablets didn't hit the market in numbers until about 1909, some thirty years after Heintzelman produced it. Perhaps the tablet was simply mistakenly dated. The younger Heintzelman graduated

from West Point in 1899. Perhaps ten years later a friend gave it to him, as the tablets could have been purchased by that time, and the information about it could have been confused or perhaps twisted or even exaggerated, as such things are at times. After all, the idea was still prevalent in the early 1900's that the American Indians had descended from the lost tribes of Israel. Someone might have thought it amusing to use the cuneiform as "proof" of the theory. However, such a carefully worked out hoax would surely not have had strong support with just one lone tablet.

We can do some wondering of our own. Could this archaeological "treasure" actually have been in the possession of very ancient Americans (like the Jaredites), and have been handed down from generation to generation?

We can only conclude, as did the editor of Smithsonian, "So no one really knows how or why this small archaeological item wound up at West Point. We know much more about its long-ago past, when Nalu got that lamb from Abbasaga."

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