



FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH ON ANCIENT AMERICA

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NEWSLETTER NO. 9

May 4, 1971

Dear Friends,

Again, those of the Foundation who serve you send greetings. These greetings are sent by the same staff of officers who have served during the past year, as they were all sustained by the annual meeting in January. They are: Thelona D. Stevens, chairman, Chris B. Hartshorn, vice-chairman, Katherine H. Wilson, secretary, and Frances R. Davidson, treasurer. Committee chairman also remain the same: Kenneth Raveill, publicity and Audrey Stubbart, manuscripts.

The high light of the annual meeting was the excellent, illustrated lecture by Brother Charles R. Hield on Teotihuacan. He showed the temples of the sun and the moon, and much of the surrounding area and many points of interest. He said that the period between 200 B.C. and A.D. 200 was one of great growth. Then, suddenly, about A.D. 600, those people became extinct. Brother Hield also displayed a number of artifacts and figurines from Mexico.

A number of our readers have noted our request for prompt change-of-address information by those who wish to have continued mailings of the Newsletter. Gladly we have noted these changes in our files as we have received them. We regret, however, that many names will have to be dropped from our mailing list, if the usual pattern follows of mail returned because individuals moved and no change of address was given. We urge, please, that the new address be sent to us, even if you notify your local post office.

The growing interest in the Newsletter, and the alertness of members and friends in sending items are appreciated. Some items of interest cannot be used because full information of the source was not given. One item gave the name of the newspaper, but not the city in which it is published, so we cannot use this item. Please check carefully to be sure that you include full documentation when sending in clippings or quotations. We must have the publisher's name, address (city and state), date of publication, and page number if the quotations are from books. (We always paraphrase to avoid copyright infringement.)

Your interest is appreciated, and we have gladly added the names of friends to whom you wish the Newsletter sent. There is no charge. Just be sure that the complete address, including the zip code number, is given, please.

--T.D.S.

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From Jeri Ann Graci, of Rochester, New York, we have the following summary of Toltec legends concerning the Flood, as found in Atlantis, The Antediluvian World, by Ignatius Donnelly, edited by Egerton Sykes (modern, revised edition), (1949), by Harper and Brothers.

Miss Graci gives Ixtilzochitl's Toltec legend of the Flood, with explanations and thoughts of her own:

Ixtilzochitl's legend as found in the histories of the Toltecs is that this age and the first world, as they call it, lasted 1716 years; that men were destroyed by tremendous rains and lightning from the sky, and even all the land, without the exception of anything, and the highest mountains were covered up and submerged in water fifteen cubits (caxtolmolatli); and here they added other fables from the few who escaped from this destruction in a "toplipelocali;" that this word nearly signifies a closed chest; and how, after men had multiplied, they erected a very high "zaacuali," which is today a tower of great height, in order to take refuge in it should the second world (age) be destroyed. Presently their languages were confused, and, not being able to understand one another, they went to different parts of the earth.

The Toltecs, consisting of seven friends with their wives, who understood the same language, came to these parts, having first passed great land and seas, having lived in caves, and having endured great hardships in order to reach this land;...they wandered 104 years through different parts of of the world before they reached Huc Huc Tlapalan, which was in Ce Tecpatl, 520 years after the Flood.

It will, of course, be said that those particulars where they agree with the Bible, were derived from teachings of the Spanish priests, but it must be remembered that Ixliltxochitl was an Indian, a native of Tezucó, a son of the queen, and that his "Relaciones" were drawn from archives of his family and the ancient writings of his nation; he had no motive to falsify documents that were probably in the hands of hundreds at that time.

Here we see that the depth of water over the earth, "fifteen cubits," given in the Toltec legend, is precisely the same as that named in the Bible, "Fifteen cubits upward did the water prevail" (Genesis 8:41, I.V.; 7:20, K.J.).

In the two curious Aztec Codices preserved in the Boturini collection, and published by Gemelli Careri and others, there is a record of their migrations from their original location through various parts of North America until their arrival in Mexico. In both cases, their starting point is an island, from which they passed in a boat.

--Pages 87, 189, 277, in particular.

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Help, please! Mrs. Willard Green, of Oxford, Michigan, has sent us a photograph which she took on a trip to Tucson, Arizona, showing a stone cross which was brought from Mexico, she was told. Around the arms of the cross is a "crown of thorns," carved in stone, and on the side of the cross are some hieroglyphics. The cross has been mounted on a foundation, and is located in the St. Phillips Church court yard.

If someone living in this area could find out more about this cross, which is apparently of ancient origin, and its history--where it came from in Mexico, and any other facts which can be substantiated, we would appreciate it, and would be happy to share the information with our readers.

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Ford Truck Times Magazine, Fall, 1970, tells the story of John Carricut, a sheep herder, lost in a blinding blizzard in California's Coso Mountains in the winter of 1920. Urging his sheep into a wilderness gorge to find shelter in a nich under a protective ledge, Carricut stumbled out to find himself surrounded by a canyon wall art gallery--thousands of primitive petroglyphs (wall carvings), which scientists now say date back over 2,000 years.

Although the carvings were classified as the largest concentration of prehistoric Indian petroglyphs on the North American continent, little public attention was given to the discovery for some forty years, due mostly no doubt to the remoteness of the area. Incidentally, the remoteness saved them from possible vandalism, which frequently follows such finds.

In 1943, when the Naval Weapons Test Center was established at nearby China Lake, special protection was given the "picture rocks" by placing "off limits" to all but a select group of archaeologists and anthropologists.

In 1964, the Department of the Interior designated the canyon area a registered national historic monument, and sightseers may now visit the area on weekends, when there is a lull in the Naval Weapons Test Center's busy schedule, though access to the area is still most difficult.

Alternating cold rain and desert heat caused the Coso rock to build up a dark, shiny patina called "desert varnish," which still does not obscure the original image drawn on the rocks some 2,000 years ago.

The guess of the age of the pictures as originating 2,000 years ago is an "educated guess," based on the atlatl (spear-throwing stick) which gave way later to the bow and arrow. Scientists recognize both of these weapons in the Coso petroglyphs, showing that the atlatl began to disappear around 200 B.C., and by the year 300 A.D. it had been completely replaced by the bow. (Book of Mormon students will recall that the bow and arrow was a common weapon among the Nephites from the time they left Jerusalem--I Nephi 5:17-26, being mentioned frequently throughout their history, until the downfall of the nation--Mormon 3:11).

The petroglyphs depict hunting scenes, hunters armed with atlatls and bows, dogs attacking sheep, and one shows a 6-foot-long cat, which in the Coso Mountains could be only a mountain lion, in the opinion of Bob Grant, author of the article. Mr. Grant also points out that among the more than 14,000 carvings, only one shows a man raising his weapon against another man.

--Pages 7-9

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This testimony of Patriarch Harold I. Velt is taken from his book, Not In Word Only (1963), Herald House, Independence, Mo., p. 288, 289.

Brother Velt and his wife, with some friends, were being guided through the "marvelous ruins of Mitla, Mexico. We were particularly impressed with our Zapotec Indian guide. His clear enunciation in Spanish made it easy for me to follow his descriptive explanations and interesting accounts--easier than I had found before. His skin was very dark. This was probably accentuated by the fact that he wore only a cap in the blazing sun. We had noticed how he would doff that cap out of respect whenever we mentioned the name of Benito Juarez, the great Indian emancipator and president of Mexico, who also was a full-blood Zapotec Indian. Just as we were passing into the hall of mosaics, the thought struck me, He is the darkest Indian I have seen in this area. Then there came to my mind the statement of Mormon (2:44), 'For this people shall be scattered, and shall become a dark . . . people, beyond the description of that which ever hath been amongst us; yea, even that which hath been among the Lamanites.' Immediately I found myself bathed in the Spirit of God, and it was made known to me that this Indian was not a Lamanite but a Nephite."

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To Major and Mrs. Gary R. Lair, of Wichita Falls, Texas (for an article from the Wichita Falls Record News, March 23, 1971), and to Edna Easter, of Independence, Missouri (for an article from the Omaha World-Herald, March 23, 1971), we give credit for the following information.

A Brandeis University professor, Dr. Cyrus H. Gordon, founder of the department of Mediterranean Studies at this university, believes that Mediterranean people discovered America 1,000 years before Columbus (see reference to this in our last Newsletter), has found a Mexican colleague with evidence to support his theory. He is Prof. Alexander von Wuthenau of the University of the Americas in Mexico City.

A recently excavated stone proves that Mediterraneans lived in Mexico as long ago as 700 A.D., according to Prof. von Wuthenau, who said that the figure in the Maya Stela, an upright stone carved in relief, wears an earring with a Star of David in its center. This stone was uncovered in Campeche recently. In its side is depicted a squat, scowling man wearing a typical large Mayan earring. The earring shows "the Star of David in the middle of a round disc, partly covered with horizontal lines which might mean water. This ornament is encircled by a rope, very much the sort you would expect to see on a ship," explained Prof. von Wuthenau. The figure wears a torpedo-shaped hat.

Prof. von Wuthenau said further, "In my opinion, it depicts a ship seen from above, which, surprisingly enough, has great affinity with ancient Egyptian papyrus boats," and he adds that the combination of a sailing ship and the Star of David is consistent with a figure on a Jewish tomb at Beit-Shearim, Israel, dating from the 2nd or 3rd century.

Prof. von Wuthenau believes that the mid-Americas were populated before 300 A.D. by an assortment of Old World people, including Japanese, Chinese, African Negroes, and Mediterraneans. Professor Gordon says that Jews may have fled westward to the Americas after defeats in the Middle East by the Romans in 70 A.D. and 135 A.D.

We firmly believe that these professors would find many acceptable answers to their questions by reading and studying the pages of the Book of Mormon.

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Located some eighteen miles from Los Lunas, New Mexico is a rock bearing an inscription which some authorities on ancient languages believe to be akin to the early Hebrew language. It is believed the writing on the rock is most closely related to an old Samaritan script. C. R. Blake and Lawrence F. Halousek of Sherman Oaks, California, themselves somewhat familiar with ancient languages, claim that experts have definitely dated the script as having its origin between 800 B.C. and 500 A.D. most likely between 500 and 200 B.C. (If true, this would, of course, place it in the range of Nephite days in Ancient America.)

The writing on the rock is said to be an "abbreviated listing of the Ten Commandments," the wording of which appears to coincide with that found on the "Dead Sea Scrolls," it was said. Both men believe the writing on the rock gives proof to the historical accounts of the tribes of Israel as set down in the Old Testament, according to an article appearing in the San Bernardino, California Sun, May 2, 1964.

Blake and Halousek point out that this rock, as well as other rocks in the vicinity, had initials and dates scratched on them, going as far back as pioneer times. However, cuts made with steel tools are not as deep and clear as those made with the tools of the ancients. They are most confident that the ancient writing was done by human hand, since otherwise perfect spacing was interrupted in one place where it appeared a line had been inadvertently left out, and the line was added.

When sending this article to us, Elder Will Murray, of Yucaipa, California, commented that he, himself, had visited this rock and could verify the statements made concerning it

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Our Newsletter readers may be interested in following up the reference to Cahokia in our last letter, by reading the article called "A Lost Indian Empire Found, Six Minutes From St. Louis," in Argosy, March, 1971.

This article describes Cahokia as the "Greatest earth structure in North America, sacrificial pit of the virgins, giant walled fortress, and largest Indian settlement in the U.S.A."

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A burial mound atop Mississippi River bluffs adjacent to Rockport, Illinois, not far from the Cahokia Mounds, is believed to have been the site of ancient burials more than 3,500 years ago. The site was discovered by "excavations with scientific precision" by Gregory Perino of Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma and Mrs. Della Cook of the University of Chicago. Their findings were reported by the Quincy Herald Whig, Quincy, Illinois, October, 1970, and were sent to us by Mrs. Lora Puterbaugh, who lives at Pleasant Hill, Illinois, just three miles from the area of the excavation.

The newspaper article it titled, "Three Cultures Used Site since 1,500 B.C.," and goes on to state, "The first of the Archaic people were buried in the top of the bluff more than 3,500 years ago . . . Later, about 1,800 years ago, another group known as the Middle Woodland People built a log tomb on the site in which they placed some of their dead, and later constructed an earthen mound over the tomb, building it to a height of six feet." Then, about 500-800 A.D. "another structure at the end of the bluff to bury in the side of the earlier mounds to a depth of two or three feet," making them even larger than before. Some of the later skeletons were "buried deeply in the added soil and some were only a few inches deep or had partly eroded."

(Book of Mormon students would have no difficulty in identifying these various peoples as Jaredites, Nephites, and Lamanites.)

The article states, "The Woodland people belonged to a cultural pattern extending over the midwestern, eastern and northeastern United States and Canada, beginning about 500 B.C. and, in some areas, extending into historic times."

Four skeletons of people identified with the earliest people were found, together with a side-notched date point. Identified as belonging to the Middle Woodland people, in what had once been a log tomb, were found two skeletons, "one of which lay extended and had the lower jaw of a wolf at its waist. The jaw had been cut and polished as an ornament." The second skeleton "lay in flexed position, with arms and legs folded, and had a seashell vessel on one side, a scalloped shell, and two sheets of mica on the other, and a small side-notched arrow point that lay on a leg bone."

Mr. Perino surmised that the sea shells "may have been traded from either the southeast Atlantic Coast or the Gulf Coast. The two sheets of mica, five or six inches wide, was found to be of the type found in the Carolinas, and were thought to have been used as mirrors or for signaling.

"The small arrowhead found with the second skeleton seems to be entirely out of place," Perino commented, "as the bow and arrow is not known to have been in use at the time the Middle Woodland people lived here. It was probably developed or introduced into the area from the northwest around 500 A.D."

The bluffs topped by the burial grounds are located about half a block east of Highway 96. The area has been used for years as pasture land. Leaves on the trees obscure the view, but in the fall and winter months, after the leaves have fallen, the river levee and glimpses of the river where it makes turns are visible. The article reminds us that when Indians camped in the area and buried their dead on the bluffs, the Mississippi "meandered wherever it chose and was much closer to the bluffs."

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Hundreds of volunteers contributed more than 10,000 hours of time, energy, and patience to help dig into the tar pits at Rancho La Bera, the seeping asphalt area of half a city block in the heart of Los Angeles. It is located just off Wilshire boulevard, behind the Los Angeles County Art Museum. Rancho La Bera is the name for "The Tar Ranch," a pit of tar preserving perhaps millions of prehistoric creatures--mastodons and mammoths, saber teeth and giant vultures, carrion beetles, and inch-long rodents.

The dig, run by the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, is thought to be the first such excavation to bring archaeology to the masses. The volunteers are drawn by accounts in the local papers, and by friends. They are "screened by the museum staff on the basis of their interest in the work and their willingness to follow instructions to the letter. They are now putting in about 3,000 man-hours a month," says Jane E Brody of the New York Times News Service. Miss Brody states that scientists believe the special interest results from the emergence of fossils in cluster, rather than single specimen.

George J. Miller, director of the project explained, "We find flora and fauna in relation to one another and when we're through, we shall be able to reconstruct the ice age environment in which these animals live."

---Kansas City Star, October 25, 1970

(Contributed by Lillian Black, Independence, Missouri.)

The La Brea Museum has already contributed to Book of Mormon claims. See our Newsletter for December 10, 1969, with reference to the American horse.

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