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American Antiquities: Corroborative of the Book of Mormon

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Abstract: This 47-part series provides evidence to confirm the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. It describes the contents of the Book of Mormon and archaeological findings and discoveries, such as ancient cities, temples, altars, tools, and wells. Each part contains several excerpts from other publications that support the Book of Mormon.

May the Lord bless and prosper you and all the honest in heart, is the prayer of your brother in the Gospel of Christ,
BRIGHAM YOUNG.

WALES.

Merthyr Tydfil,
December 17, 1858.

President Calkin.

Dear Brother,—According to my promise to you at Cardiff, I now address you a few lines.

Last Sunday I was at Swansea with President Evans and brother John. We had a very good Conference there, and indeed have had in each of the Conferences in the Mission. We have endeavoured to instil in the minds of the

Saints the counsel and instructions we received from you at Cardiff, and my faith is that a large amount will be added to the Penny Emigration Fund the coming year from Wales.

I have been travelling in the ministry nearly eight years, and I can truly say that I never saw so good a feeling generally as there is now. The whole Welsh Mission, with but very few exceptions, is in good working order and a healthy condition.

President Evans, myself, and brother John are as one in mind and feelings, and so we have been. We are looking for a good time at Birmingham. May God bless you, brother Calkin.

Yours truly,

JOHN DAVIES.

AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES,

CORROBORATIVE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

(From the *Panama Echo*, April 19, 1853.)

"It will be remembered that in the *Daily Echo* of March 9 a short paragraph announced the discovery of an earthenware vessel, containing copper coins, at old Panama. Yesterday we were favoured with a careful inspection of these relics of old times, by Dr Authenreith, of this city, into whose possession they have now come. Not professing to be a numismatologist, we are of course unable to read and interpret the inscriptions; but it is evident that they are all of Roman origin, many of them containing quite legibly the names of Maximinus, Diocletian, and Constantine. By this, therefore, we have a clue to their date. . . . These are, we believe, the first Roman coins ever discovered upon the continent of America; and as such, and from the locality in which they have been brought to light, they will doubtless possess much interest in the eyes of those curious in such matters, although their intrinsic value is probably not worth more than that of the old copper they contain."

(From an American paper.)

"A copper kettle has been found 17 feet below the surface, near Altona, Illinois, imbedded in a vein of coal. It was found on Buffalo Rock, on the Illinois river. All ask, How could it come into a solid bed of coal?"

(From the *Washington [Texas] American*.)

"The ruins of an immense stone structure have been discovered by some gentlemen hunting in the Big Thicket, near San Jacinto. The foundation of the edifice covers an area of 310 by 260 feet. Marble columns 16 feet high, and beautifully ornamented, were discovered, as also were marble slabs, supposed to have been used as steps. The ruins are situated in the midst of a dense thicket, almost impenetrable, and in all probability would not have been discovered by these gentlemen, had it not been for a pack of dogs having overtaken a bear near the spot, in quest of which the gentlemen went."

(From an American paper.)

"By an official document transmitted recently by the Governor of the province of Loja, in the republic of Ecuador, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, it appears that an interesting discovery of the remains of an ancient city had been made there. These ruins are situated at some 20 miles from the city of Loja, in the centre of the mountain called Tambabaluco. Toward an angle of the north, in an extensive plain, is to be seen a beautiful temple of 64 yards long and ten wide, with pillars perfectly worked and in good condition. To

the south is seen a magnificent palace of 60 yards long, with a grand gateway, worked in the same style as the temple, spacious saloons and apartments, with enclosed baths, which convey the idea of gardens. To the east stand several buildings, forming streets, which, though of less magnificence, are of the same material. The former populousness of this city may be estimated by the size of two pantheons on each side, each at least four miles and a half in extent, with places set apart for interring the dead."

(From the *Massachusetts Eagle*, Aug. 11, 1848.)

"A correspondent of the *Buffalo Express*, writing under date June 14, from Ontonagon, Lake Superior, says:—'Mr. Knapp, of the Vulcan Mining Company, has lately made some very singular discoveries here in working one of the veins which he lately found. He worked into an old cave, which had been excavated centuries ago. This led them to look for further works of the same sort, and they have found a number of sinks in the earth, which they have traced a long distance. By digging into those sinks, they find them to have been made by the hand of man. It appears that the ancient miners went on a different principle from what they do at the present time. The greatest depth yet found in these holes is 30 feet. After getting down to a certain depth, they drifted along the vein, making an open cut. These cuts have been filled nearly to a level by the accumulation of soil, and we find trees of the greatest growth standing in this gutter, and also find that trees of a very large growth have grown up and died, and decayed many years since. In the same places there are now standing trees of over 300 years' growth.'"

(From the *Lake Superior News*.)

"There is much curiosity felt by all visitors to this mine, [Lake Superior Copper Mine,] on account of the stupendous workings of a race of people now extinct. Their diggings can be traced on the three principal ridges, where veins are well developed from one to two miles in extent. Their tools and evidence of some skill in mining remain. Their age cannot be determined from existing evidences, yet sufficient to indicate great age. Some excavations are 30 feet deep. The wash of time has filled them to leave a slight depression. Trees of gigantic size have grown up in them and decayed. Evidences that these depressions are not natural are that, on opening, stone hammers are found—masses of copper, removed—copper tools also, similar in size and shape to those described by Humboldt in his travels

in Mexico and the historical accounts of Egypt. It is known that the ancient Egyptians were acquainted with the art of tempering copper. Their tools, from their shape and supposed object, give equal evidence of that art. Why not, then, a reasonable conclusion that the race and age were the same with the pyramids of Egypt, the ruins of Mexico, and the ancient mining works on Lake Superior?"

(From the *New York Post*.)

"The following is an extract from a letter written to his wife by a New Yorker, now working in the mines of California. The letter bears date August 26, 1849:—'There was a gold mine discovered here (what is called Murphy's Diggings) one week to-day. It is evidently the work of ancient times, 210 feet deep, situated on the summit of a very high mountain. It has made a great excitement here, as it was several days before preparations could be made to descend to the bottom. There was found in it the bones of a human being, also an altar for worship, and some other evidences of human labour. From present indications, it is doubtful whether it will pay to be worked, as it is mostly all rock, and will require a great outlay for tools and machinery to work it.' This discovery, if properly pursued by competent observers, may prove of the highest historical importance. It will establish the fact that the mineral wealth of that region has been known to preceding generations; and the relics which have survived may enlighten us as to the nationality of the people who first pierced this mountain 210 feet, and will doubtless suggest an inquiry into the reasons for abandoning the pursuit of gold in a country in which it seems to abound, and where its discoverers had found encouragement to make such extensive excavations in former times."

(From the *Texas Telegraph*, Oct. 11, 1843.)

"We have been informed by a gentleman who has traversed a large portion of the Indian country of Northern Texas and the country lying between Santa Fe and the Pacific, that there are vestiges of ancient cities and ruined castles or temples on the Rio Puerco and on the Colorado of the West. He says that on one of the branches of the Rio Puerco, a few days' travel from Santa Fe, there is an immense pile of ruins that appears to belong to an ancient temple. Portions of the walls are still standing, consisting of huge blocks of limestone regularly hewn and laid in cement. The building occupies an extent of more than an acre. It is two or three stories high, has no roof, but

contains many rooms, generally of a square form, without windows; and the lower rooms are so dark and gloomy that they resemble caverns rather than the apartments of an edifice built for a human habitation. Our informant did not give the style of architecture, but he believes it could not have been erected by Spaniards or Europeans, as the stones are much worn by the rains, and indicate that the building has stood several hundred years. From his description, we are induced to believe that it resembles the ruins of Palenque or Otulun. He says there are many similar ruins on the Colorado of the West, which empties into the Californian Sea. In one of the valleys of the Corderillas traversed by this river, and about 400 miles from its mouth, there is a large temple still standing, its walls and spires presenting scarcely any trace of dilapidation; and were it not for want of a roof, it might still be rendered habitable. Near it, scattered along the declivity of a mountain, are the ruins of what has been once a large city. The traces of a large aqueduct, part of which is however in the solid rock, are still visible. Neither the Indians residing in the vicinity nor the oldest Spanish settlers of the nearest settlements can give any account of the origin of these buildings. They merely know that they have stood there from the early periods to which their traditions extend."

(From the *Placerville [Cal.] Herald*.)

"A party of men, five in number, had ascended the Colorado for nearly 200 miles above the mouth of the Gila, their object being to discover, if possible, some large tributary from the West, by which they might make the passage of the desert, and enter California by a new and easier route. They represent the country on either side of the Colorado as almost totally barren of every vegetable product, and so level and monotonous that any object sufficient to arrest the attention possesses more or less of interest; and it was this that led to the discovery of this hitherto unknown relic of a forgotten age. An object appeared upon the plain to the West, having so much the appearance of a work of art, from the regularity of its outline and its isolated position, that the party determined upon visiting it. Passing over an almost barren sand plain, a distance of nearly five miles, they reached the base of one of the most wonderful objects, considering its location—it being the very home of desolation—that the mind can possibly conceive of,—nothing less than an immense stone pyramid, composed of layers or courses of from 18 inches to nearly three

feet in thickness, and from five to eight feet in length. It has a level top of more than 50 feet square, though it is evident that it was once completed, but that some great convulsion of nature has displaced its entire top, as it evidently now lies a huge and broken mass upon one of its sides, though nearly covered by the sands. This pyramid differs in some respects from the Egyptian pyramids. It is or was more slender or pointed; and while those of Egypt are composed of steps or layers receding as they rise, the American pyramid was undoubtedly a more finished structure. The outer surface of the blocks was evidently cut to an angle that gave the structure, when new and complete, a smooth or regular surface from top to bottom. From the present level of the sands that surround it, there are 52 distinct layers of stone that will average at least two feet. This gives its present height 104 feet; so that before the top was displaced it must have been, judging from an angle of its sides, at least 20 feet higher than at present. How far it extends beneath the surface of the sands it is impossible to determine without great labour. Such is the age of this immense structure that the perpendicular joints between the blocks are worn away to the width of from five to ten inches at the bottom of each joint, and the entire of the pyramid so much worn by the storms, the vicissitudes, and the corrodings of centuries, as to make it easy of ascent, particularly upon one of its sides. We say one of its sides, because a singular fact connected with this remarkable structure is, that it inclines ten degrees to one side of the vertical or perpendicular."

(From the *Beardstown Illinoisian*.)

"While visiting a friend in Sangamon Bottom, in this county, a short time since, we were called to examine a specimen of stone which he had lately taken from a neighbouring quarry. The curiosity consisted of two sandstone rocks, which were found joining each other in contextual form, which, when separated, the face of one presented the appearance of having being a part of the side of a vessel, near the gunwale. There seems to have been an overlapping of the timber, in the form of a moulding, around the vessel. The work of art is as plain to be seen on the stone as on the floating vessel. The holes formed by the nails are very distinct, as well as the fossilized texture of the wood. There are also pieces of iron with the specimen, which seems to have been used, instead of caulking, between the strips of plank."

(To be continued.)