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## U.A.S. Newsletter, no. 33 (March 7, 1956)

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# U. A. S. NEWSLETTER

Number 33

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Published approximately every six weeks by THE UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. The purpose of the Newsletter is to disseminate knowledge of recent archaeological discoveries bearing on the Latter-day Saint scriptures; also, of the Society and its members. Subscription by membership in the Society: three dollars per year; or Life Membership, fifty dollars. (Membership also includes subscription to other publications of the Society and the Department of Archaeology of BYU.)

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- 33.0 UAS Expedition Finds New Evidence on Bountiful. The UAS expedition to Central America, headed by Society president M. Wells Jakeman (see last Newsletter, 32.0), has discovered important new evidence bearing on the location of the city Bountiful of the Book of Mormon. According to a recent post card from Dr. Jakeman, the group had just returned from the ruins of Cerrillos in the heart of the Xicalango jungle, the same area explored by him in 1948 (August 23, 1954, Newsletter, 22.02). The party planned to leave immediately for the middle Usumacinta River for exploration and excavation in what is believed to be the region of Zarahemla (*ibid.*, 22.03).
- 33.00 Transfer of Lehi Stone Delayed. The transfer of the Lehi Tree-of-Life Stone from Izapa to the National Museum will be delayed, writes Dr. Jakeman in an earlier letter from Mexico City. The citizens of the nearby town of Tapachula have suddenly developed a zealous proprietary interest in the ruins and the stela. There has been strong resistance against the government's efforts to remove it. Officials are working to mollify local resentment and complete the project.
- 33.01 Presents Drawing. While in Mexico City, Dr. Jakeman presented a large photograph of his actual-size drawing of the Lehi Stone (see December 9 Newsletter, 31.11) to Dr. Eduardo Noguera, Director of Prehispanic Monuments of Mexico, in behalf of the UAS. Dr. Noguera greatly appreciated the gift; it will eventually be mounted alongside the monument, it is expected. He agreed, "that the stela was an extremely important discovery," and was "intrigued" by the Near Eastern parallels which the BYU professor pointed out.
- By arrangement with the Mexican government, the UAS paid the cost of transferring the Lehi Stone from Izapa to the National Museum for its protection and to make it available to students and tourists (see September 22 Newsletter, 29.0).
- The Izapa sculpture was identified by Dr. Jakeman in 1951 as a portrayal of the Book of Mormon prophet Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life (I Nephi 8; see Bulletin No. 4, March, 1953).
- 33.1 Archaeology Ten Years Old at BYU. Ten years ago this month the first class in archaeology was taught at the BYU.
- Tuesday, March 26, 1946, at 9:00 AM, some 59 students met in Room 350 of the Brimhall Building to hear Dr. M. Wells Jakeman give the first lecture of his class on "Archaeology

and the Book of Mormon." The class carried two quarter-hours of academic credit and met on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

A chair of archaeology had been created and Dr. Jakeman named to fill it, the preceding autumn. On December 13, 1946, archaeology was set up as a regular academic department. Since the first class, about 4300 students have passed through courses taught by four faculty members and five graduate assistants.

Members of that pioneer archaeology class of 1946 include Clark S. Knowlton and Ross T. Christensen, UAS general officers, and M. Carl Gibson, 1955 director of the BYU Archaeological and Cultural Tour of Mexico (August 10 Newsletter, 28.5). The class instructor, Dr. M. Wells Jakeman, founded the UAS in 1949 and has since served as its president.

33.2 Archaeology: Its Significance to the Latter-day Saint, by Alfred L. Bush. In 1841 John Lloyd Stephens returned to New York from Central America, the discoverer of a "new world within the New World". In the same year he published his magnificent Incidents of Travel . . . and America was aware that, not only a new world, but also a new science--American archaeology--had come into existence.

America was charmed by Mr. Stephens, his books, and this new science. The books went through ten editions within three months, and chatter of Copán filled many a Victorian parlor. But of all this fascinated America, it is doubtful that any group of people was more intensely interested than were the Latter-day Saints. The LDS periodicals ran editorials and Mormon tongues spoke of Stephens and his discoveries with excited satisfaction.

Time, hard work, and the careful scholarship of Stephen's successors have matured American archaeology into distinguished partnership with the most respectable of sciences. Though archaeology is not now so frequently the material for ecstatic dinner conversation it was in Stephen's time, it is still a word of special connotation and familiarity to the Latter-day Saint. Unfortunately, the interest of many of us has diminished rather than progressed along with the advance of the science; and few of us have thought beyond this surface interest to the real significance archaeology holds for us.

Even more disconcerting, however, is to detect a tinge of mistrust in some Mormons of so amiable a partner as archaeology. I suspect this mistrust has a traceable genealogy: many an impetuous Mormon with less patience than enthusiasm has indiscriminately grasped the hand of some pseudo or superficial aspect of archaeology and attempted to drag it compulsorily to a speedy vindication of every Mormon claim. Any piece of ancient hand-wrought stone, regardless of its relevancy or significance, was pounced upon as final proof of Mormon allegation. It is little wonder that thinking Latter-day Saints soon raised a suspicious brow at such tactics. But great damage can be done by carrying this mistrust of incompetent dilettantism into a mistrust of the science of archaeology itself.

Confirms. Archaeology is the great retriever of the past; it is that science which "seeks to recover the lost pages of man's history through the evidence of the actual remains of his early civilization." Among the values which justified its addition to the curriculum of Brigham Young University ten years ago, the light which it has to shed upon scripture was pre-eminent. But this value should not be confused with the purpose of the science. It is not designed to prove the authenticity of the Bible or the Book of Mormon or anything else. Such an aim would preclude its being a science; for science seeks objective truth, not proof to support any particular belief. Nevertheless, as research in biblical archaeology has so brilliantly shown, the science is in a position to confirm the scriptures by producing the actual material remains of their ancient civilizations.

There are those who tell us that we ought to walk by faith alone: that we should not seek full knowledge. They believe that the Lord will not permit archaeological or any other proof of the scriptures to come forth, for they say that by so doing He would defeat the purpose of this earth as an estate to test by faith. This denial of our right to investigate is a repudiation of our obligation to seek that truth which we are promised shall make us free. Paul tells us that we should have a reason for the faith that is in us; the Doctrine and Covenants teaches that faith is but a means to an end--an end whose glory is light and truth; and Alma develops the theme that knowledge is the just and logical fruition of faith. Knowledge is the reward for faith.

If it were the Lord's purpose to keep these things hidden from us, why did the Prophet Joseph Smith, two years before his martyrdom, not only approve of, but also attempt to bring forth archaeological knowledge? It was then that he wrote an editorial concerning the current discoveries of John Lloyd Stephens in Central America and, after speculating on their connection with Book of Mormon peoples, said that "He [the Lord] will bring everything into judgment whether it be good or whether it be evil; yea, every secret thing, and they shall be revealed upon the house tops." He then added: "It will not be a bad plan to compare Mr. Stephen's ruined cities with those in the Book of Mormon: light cleaves to light, and facts are supported by facts" (Times and Seasons, Vol. III, No. 23, October 1, 1842). Elsewhere the Lord instructs the Saints to ". . . seek learning, even by study and also by faith" and to become informed "of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms --that ye may be prepared in all things . . ." (D. & C. 88: 79-80, 118).

And aside from Latter-day Saints, what about our neighbors who are not of our faith? Is it not worth while to call upon all the resources of science to help us bring them to an

understanding of the Gospel? The possibilities which archaeology offers the missionary are great. Almost daily, news comes to us of some discovery in archaeology which bears upon the claims of the Bible and the Book of Mormon. Surely we are not to close our eyes while gentile scholars excavate the ruins of Book of Mormon cities and remain silent as they attempt to solve the mystery of the people who built them, in order that the world may believe by faith alone.

33.21 Elucidates. But even more important to Latter-day Saints than archaeology's confirmation of the scriptures, is its contribution to their elucidation. We accept the scriptures as true, but can it be supposed that we fully understand them? If Nephi said, ". . . there is none other people that understand the things which were spoken unto the Jews . . . save it be that they are taught after the manner of the things of the Jews," does it not behoove us to study the things of the Jews? Dr. John A. Widtsoe wrote that "the gospel of Jesus Christ comprehends all other knowledge. It invites the deepest study and the severest scrutiny. In religion as in science, the more a subject is studied the more perfect is our knowledge of it. Our certainty of the truth of a subject does not necessarily depend upon our knowledge, but comprehensiveness of understanding unquestionably increases as knowledge grows." We should, therefore, take advantage of the opportunity presented by archaeology to increase our understanding of these sacred writings.

Archaeology in the time of its birth gave us the Book of Abraham. In its infancy Joseph Smith realized its far-reaching possibilities, and as editor of the Nauvoo Times and Seasons he continually brought to the attention of the Saints the current discoveries of the newborn science, (in his words) to "assist the Latter-day Saints in establishing the Book of Mormon as a revelation from God." In the time of its adolescence, under Brigham Young's encouragement, interest in the science was stimulated by the maintenance of the Deseret Museum. In 1946, as a mature science, archaeology has been given an organized place in the Church program with the establishment of the Department of Archaeology at Brigham Young University (see above, 33.1).

The next step can be taken only when Latter-day Saints everywhere recognize the worth, significance and implications which archaeology holds for each of them. When they feel their obligation to seek knowledge and to keep their minds open to truth revealed through science as well as truth that comes by other means--when they recognize archaeology as a tool which they can, and should, use actively and profitably in building God's kingdom on the earth,

33.3 Society Alters Recording of Membership. In order to streamline its bookkeeping, the UAS has converted to a new method of recording memberships,

In the future, all memberships will begin on either of two dates: January 1 or July 1. The expiration dates of all memberships now in force have been extended in each case to

the nearest of these two dates. All new memberships received hereafter will be recorded as commencing either January 1 or July 1, whichever is the nearer. The next renewal notices will be mailed about June 1. Renewal fees which have already been received this year will entitle the sender to continuous membership to July 1, 1957.

Previous to this change, membership continued to the anniversary of the first payment of fees, and renewal notices were prepared and mailed about the 15th of every month.

This new practice was made necessary by the creation of the new membership category of Research Patron at the last Annual Business Meeting of the Society (December 9 Newsletter, 31.20). Also, it is expected that it will reduce the labor of sending out renewal notices.

33.4 Campus Chapter Tours Museums. On February 11, about 15 members and guests of the Campus Chapter (BYU) visited archaeological museums in Salt Lake City and Lohi, Utah.

The group was guided through the Museum of Anthropology of the University of Utah by James H. Gunnerson, director of the Statewide Archaeological Survey of Utah and editor of the newsletter, Utah Archaeology (September 22 Newsletter, 29.5). The group also visited the museum in the Bureau of Information at Temple Square. In Lohi, Mr. John Hutchings showed the chapter his private museum, which has resulted from scientific excavations in Utah Valley since 1911 and exchanges of antiquities from other states. The excursion was led by Robert R. Beishline, chapter president.

33.5 Slides Shown at Chicago Exhibit. Colored slides of a large archaeological ruin in Peru taken by Ross T. Christensen, assistant professor of Archaeology at BYU, will be shown in connection with a month-long exhibit at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Twenty-five Kodachrome transparencies were taken by Mr. Christensen in 1950 at the ruins of Pañamarca in the Nepeña valley during the course of a year's research in the archaeology of the north coast of Peru as a Pan-American Fellow. They were requested by Dr. Richard P. Schaedel of the Yale University Institute of Human Relations as a feature of his exhibit in the Chicago institute of a set of remarkable wall paintings discovered by him at Pañamarca. Mr. Christensen was present while excavation of the paintings was in progress.

The exhibit is scheduled to run from February 18 to March 18. Mr. Christensen's transparencies will be projected from an automatic viewer on a ground-glass screen and will be shown in rotation at ten-second intervals.

33.6 BYU Students Report Mexico Expedition. The New World Archaeological Foundation completed six weeks of work at Chiapa de Corzo, southern Mexico, on December 24, according to letters recently received from Gareth W. Lowe, Bruce W. Warren, Richard D. Madison, and Lorenzo C. Allen, BYU archaeology students accompanying the expedition (November 8 Newsletter, 30.3).

Other important excavations have been completed near Acala, while the Grijalva River has been reconnoitered to the Guatemalan border.

Work at the Chiapa de Corzo site revealed more than 50 mounds dating from the first century BC to about 300 AD, about 15 burials, over 100,000 potsherds, and what are probably the earliest discovered structures of cut stone in southern Mesoamerica. The site was evidently abandoned around 300 AD and lay unoccupied until after the Classic period. (This date is of particular interest when compared with the Book of Mormon claim [Mormon 2] that the Nephites abandoned the Land Southward about 350 AD.)

Later, the group worked at Puerto Mexico, across the river from Acala, and there discovered some 15 late Classic mounds with the typical rectangular arrangement and ball court.

The group also conducted exten-



A pyramid of the pre-Classic (Book of Mormon) period at Chiapa de Corzo, perhaps the earliest structure of cut stone yet discovered in southern Mesoamerica.

sive reconnaissance of the Grijalva River from Chiapa de Corzo nearly to the Guatemalan border, locating over a dozen pre-Classic (Book of Mormon period) sites and numerous late ones. The Foundation planned to begin excavation February 19 at Finca Laguna in an area containing considerable pre-Classic material near Comitán.

At Christmas, Messrs. Madison and Allen toured Chichén Itzá, Uxmal, and Palenque, in Yucatan.

Mr. Lowe, assistant field director of the NWAFF expedition, was presented the John A. Widtsoe Memorial Award of the BYU Department of Archaeology and elected a general officer of the Society at its last Annual Business Meeting (December 9 Newsletter, 31.10 and 31.22). Both he and Mr. Warren were former editors of the UAS Newsletter.



The NWAFF field staff following a day of work at Chiapa de Corzo. From left to right: Messrs. Lowe, Madison, Warren, Heinrich Berlin (field director), Allen, and Eduardo Martínez (topographer).