



Type: Magazine Article

---

## The Prophet Said Silk

Author(s): Maurice W. Connell

Source: *Improvement Era*, Vol. 65, No. 5 (May 1962)

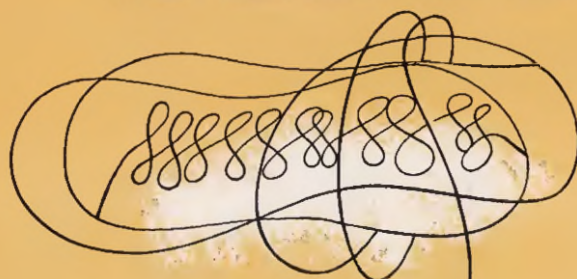
Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Page(s): 324–326, 338–340, 342, 344–345

---

**Abstract:** This article discusses how the inclusion of the word “silk” in the Book of Mormon has been met with controversy. The author offers evidence that there might have been silk production prior to the Spanish conquest, substantiated by excerpts from Thomas Gage’s autobiography published in 1758.

# THE PROPHET SAID SILK



Oliver Cowdery, pen in hand, listened intently to the voice coming through the curtain: "And it came to pass in the eighth year of the reign of the judges, that the people of the church began to wax proud, because of their exceeding riches, and their fine silks, and their fine-twined linen."<sup>1</sup>

The voice was that of Joseph Smith, the American Prophet. The words were his translation of part of the Book of Mormon, soon to become one of the world's most controversial books. Oliver, the Prophet's scribe, heard other startling claims about ancient American culture, such as possession of the horse and the wheel, which have since been vindicated. However, it is still a prevalent assumption that the claim of silk in America, 84 BC, is a false claim, and that it was not possibly known in America before Columbus. It is a universal assumption that China alone possessed this textile at the date cited.

The Book of Mormon was printed in 1830, when North Americans knew little about the exploits of the Spanish in Mexico, or of Aztec or Mayan ruins, or of the traditions which the natives told to the Spanish padres. Most Americans first heard of the extent of these ruins in 1841, when the father of American archaeology published two volumes of his travels in that area. This was John Lloyd Stephens. An English historian of the silk industry was equally ignorant of any history of silk in Central America at the time the Book of Mormon was published.

In 1831 there was published in England a "*Treatise on the Origin, Progressive Improvement and Present State of the Silk Manufacture*."<sup>2</sup> Almost a hundred pages of the treatise deals with the history of silk, and although it is a fact that Spain was active in that field and was in a position to initiate the industry in Mexico, had she so chosen, the volume makes no note of it, although it chronicles such efforts made in America by the English.

This omission serves to illustrate that the English-speaking peoples generally (and the Vermont-born Prophet in particular) did not know, in 1830, that there had ever been silk produced in this hemisphere in ancient times or immediately after the conquest of Mexico. The Book of Mormon boldly and confidently intrudes into a great dearth of acceptable knowledge, and with the position of divine authority institutes itself above all historical omissions and

BY MAURICE W. CONNELL

contrary opinions about a great variety of things, silk included.

The omission of mention of Mexican silk in the treatise, of course, in no way initially binds us to an assumption that silk was not there at the time of the conquest or afterwards introduced by the Spaniards. Inasmuch as early Spanish accounts mention the possession of silk by the natives, an examination of the available records is in order, so that we can see if the weight of evidence is on the side of a Spanish introduction of this commodity or on the side of prepossession by the natives.

According to popular history, the peculiar advantages of silkworm cocoons was discovered by the Chinese, who monopolized the knowledge for many centuries. Roman craving for this luxury, the story goes, far exceeded the supply they were getting from China. The origin of the fiber was a mystery to the occidental world. In the reign of Justinian, however, two Nestorian monks discovered the secret while in China. "There, amidst their pious occupations, they viewed with a curious eye the common dress of the Chinese, the manufactures of silk, and the myriads of silkworms. . . . They soon discovered that it was impractical to transplant the short-lived insect, but that in the eggs a numerous progeny might be preserved, and multiplied in a distant climate. They observed with interest the labors of the little creature, and strove to make themselves acquainted with all the manual arts employed in working up its productions into so great a variety of fabrics."<sup>3</sup>

Returning to the West the monks communicated their discovery to Justinian, who sponsored their return to China with a hollow cane in hand. Filled with silkworm eggs, it proved an acceptable gift to Justinian in 555 AD. The new-found art quickly flourished, causing less importation from China. A Chinese ambassador eventually discovered the stolen industry. "The sight of silkworms, and the establishments for manufacturing their produce, in Constantinople, were as unwelcome as unexpected; but he concealed his mortification, and, with perhaps an overstrained civility, acknowledged that the Romans were already become as expert as the Chinese in the management of the worms, and the manufacture of their silk."<sup>4</sup>

The treatise states that during the reign of Henry V of England "Spain, as well as Italy, had at this time made considerable progress in the production and manufacture of silk. When Ferdinand V conquered Granada, and put an end to the Moorish power in Spain, he found there numerous establishments for the production of silken fabrics, which were rivalled by others carried on in Murcia and Cordova."<sup>5</sup>

England tried to establish the industry in North America, particularly in Virginia, Georgia, and Carolina. "Many parts of the southern states of America appear to be as well adapted for the cultivation of mulberry trees and the rearing of silkworms as the European countries in which they are already successfully produced. It is said that the principal difficulty . . . arose out of the circumstances of the laboring population . . . who could not be made sufficiently attentive and skillful in the management of the business."<sup>6</sup>

These quotations from the treatise (1831) indicate that the technique of silkworm raising and silk manufacture (sericulture) had been successfully developed by the Europeans prior to the conquest of Mexico, with a strong inference that any introduction of silk into Mexico by the Spanish would be marked by the competitive impulse, which has always dominated the silk industry in Europe and Asia, and that such introduction of silk into Mexico would be implemented by the best techniques and resources available.

England's policy gives a typical example. "James was likewise anxious to introduce the silkworms into his American colonies (1622) and several times urged the Virginia company to promote the cultivation of mulberry trees and the breeding of silkworms."<sup>7</sup> "In the earliest infancy of the settlement of Georgia, in the year 1732, a piece of ground belonging to government, was allotted as a nursery plantation for white mulberry trees, and the attention of some of the settlers was soon engaged in rearing silkworms."<sup>8</sup>

A US Government Report, 1868, states that "Our country is specially fitted for silk culture. The experiments in Georgia and South Carolina proved that the soil and climate were peculiarly suited to it."<sup>9</sup> The same report also says, "Like its vegetation, silk culture in Equador can flourish the year round. The food required by the worms is only half as much as in Europe, because of the superior richness of the leaves, and the more favorable conditions of the climate. . . . No doubt considerable portions of South America are well adapted to this department of industry."<sup>10</sup>

The English Society for the Encouragement of the Arts "persevered for a series of years in offering rewards for the production of silk in Great Britain and her colonies, and discontinued this encouragement only when all hope of accomplishing what appeared so desirable an object had ceased."<sup>11</sup> The English colonists found less difficulty and more profit in growing tobacco, which James abhorred.

Many readers will recall the famous "Tulip craze." America had its parallel in the raising of mulberry trees. According to the *Scientific American*, the craze



to promote silk was just as extreme, and just as abrupt in its demise. "Silk worms were fed on the white mulberry (*Morus alba*) until 1830, when there appeared the Chinese mulberry, or *Morus multicaulis*."<sup>12</sup> Shortly before this the US Secretary of Agriculture had been directed to "prepare a manual on the growth and manufacture of silk. This was issued in 1828. . . . Thus it was that a speculative furor seized upon all classes of people. . . . Not only agriculturalists, but doctors of divinity, law and medicine, scholars. . . . Every one thought the glorious day was dawning when each farm would be a nursery for the young trees, and every house have its cocooneries and its silkworms yielding two or more crops of cocoons yearly. The farmers' wives and daughters, when not feeding the worms, were to reel the silk which would become as cheap as cotton."<sup>13</sup>

With such concentrated interest in America in silk, during the first years of the Mormon Church, the Book of Mormon's claim that silk was successfully produced in ancient America must have seemed completely ridiculous to the experts (if any took cognizance of the mention of silk in said book) especially when the crash of the modern industry seemed to indicate that it was not economically feasible here, even under modern "enlightened" conditions.

There were mulberry trees and silk in Mexico in the seventeenth century. According to Gage's testimony, "The third province of Mexico is called Michoacan . . . abounding in mulberry trees, silk, honey, wax. . . ."<sup>14</sup>

An American edition of Gage's autobiography was published in New Jersey in 1758, and was also serialized in the same year in the *New American Magazine*. Gage had been the only non-Spaniard permitted to enter New Spain (Mexico) in the seventeenth century. His account was recently published in modern English as *Thomas Gage's Travels in the New World*.<sup>15</sup>

"Beyond this town are the mountains called La Misteca, which abound with many rich and great towns, and do trade with the best silk that is in all that country."<sup>16</sup>

Observe that the trade is not with "the best silk that has been imported from Spain to this country," but that the phrasing strongly intimates that it is a native product, or at least produced in Mexico. Gage nowhere makes mention of the Spaniards importing silk or mulberry trees, nor does he observe breeding sheds for the artificial breeding of silkworms or contemporary industrial standards for reeling and fashioning the cloth. Gage occasionally mentions importation of other cloth, but never silk. Rich Spanish goods, he explains, are for the benefit of the luxury-loving *padres* and the nobles.

"Puebla . . . That which maketh it most famous

is the cloth which is made in it, and is sent far and near, and judged now to be as good as the cloth of Segovia, which is the best that is made in Spain, but now is not so much esteemed of nor sent so much from Spain by reason of the fine cloth which is made in this city of Puebla de los Angeles."<sup>17</sup>

The phrase "judged now to be as good as the cloth of Segovia" may indicate some Spanish industry in Mexico. Segovia was a leading textile center in Spain, but the author has found no mention of silk industry there. Spaniards in Mexico, whenever possible, avoided the heavy expense of importing goods. *The New World Guide to the Latin American Republics* (1943) notes a town in the present state of Puebla which produces shawls made of silk,<sup>18</sup> but an inquiry to the Mexican Department of Agriculture has remained unanswered, so the origin of the silk used is for the moment unknown to the author. Silk certainly is not prominent in Mexico today. The only point the author wishes to draw here is that the Spaniards made no unnecessary importations in Gage's day because of the expense, and that silk was so readily obtained from native sources as to make importation impractical.

Gage reported that in one particular area the Spanish merchants indeed obtain wares from Spain, such as were not obtainable from the natives, "wares from Spain, such as wines, linen cloth, figs, raisins, olives, and iron, though in these commodities they dare not venture too much as they are such as loath to open their purses to more than what may suffice nature. So that the Spanish commodities are chiefly brought for the friars who are the best and jovialest blades of that country."<sup>19</sup> Linen cloth was imported, but not silk, which one source praises as ideally rich.

Gage noted the clothing of the slaves of the Spanish nobles, and silk was common to them. "The gentlemen have their train of blackamoor slaves, some a dozen, some half a dozen, waiting on them, in brave and gallant liveries, heavy with gold and silver lace, with silk stockings on their black legs, and roses on their feet, and swords by their sides."<sup>20</sup>

The attire of the blackmoors and mulattos, *other than the personal slaves of the rich Spanish nobles*, is an important matter to consider, for it is extremely unlikely that the Spaniards would import silk for their benefit. They had other and cheaper articles to barter for the wealth of Mexico, and less costly means of depriving the natives and vulgar people of their valuables. They had no need to import expensive commodities for the satisfaction of the Mexicans, the blackmoors, and the mulatto segment of society.

In describing a market place where silk was sold, Gage had another opportunity to drop a comment about its importation, but (Continued on page 338)



## The Prophet said "Silk"

(Continued from page 326)

again he is conspicuously silent. The Spaniards and the common people were equally enjoying the silk of Mexico, and the former evidently satisfied enough with its somewhat poorer quality to the extent that importation of a slightly better quality would be needless extravagance.

The mention of a coif (headdress) bound over with a "network of silk bound with fair silk" indicates degrees of crudity in the native material, or variant quality. This is in accord with the quotation previously given: "Beyond this town are the mountains called La Misteca, which abound with many rich and great towns, and do trade with the *best* silk that is in all that country."

The Spaniards found more novelty in a dyestuff called *cochineal*, which

is made from the ground bodies of an insect raised on a particular type of cactus. The Mexicans evidently took silk and cochineal equally for granted, but the Spaniards quickly capitalized on the dyestuff. "In this province of Zoques, the towns are not very big, yet they be very rich. The chief commodities are silk and cochineal; whereof the latter is held the best of America, and the store of it is so great that no one province alone exceeds it. There are few Indians who have not their own orchards planted with the trees whereon breed the worms which yield unto us that rich commodity. Not that the Indians themselves esteem it, save they see the Spaniards greedy after it, forcing them to the preservation of it in those parts which have proved most successful for this kind."<sup>21</sup> *There is a great store of silk in this country, in so much that the Indians make it their great commodity to employ their wives in working towels with all colors of silk, which the Spaniards buy and send into Spain.* It is rare to see what works these Indian women will make in silk, such as might serve for patterns and samplers to many school-mistresses in England."<sup>22</sup>

In all the editions which have been made of Gage's autobiography, some errors in copy could have been made. The text presently quoted is from the Spanish edition, published in Paris in 1808. Gage's reference to "trees whereon they breed the worms" might possibly refer to silkworms, and not cochineal. In the absence of references to breeding sheds, etc., we must suspect that the Mexicans were indeed using the poorer Chinese method of letting the worms breed on the trees. This is in accord with the editor's footnote which states, "Cultivated silk was unknown in America before the coming of the Spaniards, although there is a little evidence that the Indians may have made a limited use of a wild variety."<sup>23</sup>

Gage occasionally mentions "orchards" and "gardens," but leaves them undefined. We must judge for ourselves what he means by a "tree." The cochineal cactus (*Coccus cacti*) is indeed as tall as a moderate tree, yet elsewhere Gage is specific where "woody" timber is observed. "Others that will sow a new and woody piece of land, cause the trees, though timber trees, to be

## Domestic diplomacy

RICHARD L. EVANS



We would talk a moment or two today about what could be called "domestic diplomacy." In many places, people are ingratiating as a matter of policy. Public relations, so-called, have come to be important to individuals and organizations—the impression, the image with which, in other minds, we are inseparably associated. Merchants, manufacturers, professional men, and many others learn the importance of these impressions. All this is readily recognized in many relationships in life. And it would seem that it should also be as readily recognized—or more so—with those we love and live with—at home, in the closest of all associations, with those who mean the most. Sometimes we well would ask ourselves what it would be like not to be able to go home? Not to have a sense of belonging? Not to have a place in the family circle? Not to know that there are some who share our sorrows and successes, or who sense a personal responsibility, as if we were personally a part of them. And are not these who belong to us, and to whom we belong—are not they entitled to see the better side of ourselves—not the most formal side perhaps, but the most understanding and considerate side—to hear our thanks, to know of our interest, to share confidences, to give and take, to be accommodated even at our own inconvenience, to see us groomed and pleasant and presentable; to receive pleasant replies, and to know, to hear, to feel our gratitude and love and loyalty? There is no greater blessing God has given than that of belonging to a loving and loyal family, of having a home, a place where we are welcome, understood, a place where we are free to express ourselves, where our opinions are respected, where we are free from fear of being improperly repeated; a place where all our interests are sincerely considered and served. Surely such a place deserves the best of all we have, deserves to see and hear the better side of ourselves, and deserves to receive from us a fair share of service in all the thousand things it takes to keep it going—deserves our consideration, our appreciation, our help, and a faithful, pleasant performance of our part. "God bless our home" was the motto that once appeared on many walls. And he will bless it, and us, if we bless each other, and serve and live and share in love and loyalty. Home is, or can be, should be, the nearest thing we have to a heaven on earth.

"The Spoken Word," from Temple Square presented over KSL and the Columbia Broadcasting System, February 4, 1962. Copyright 1962.



cut down, and sell not a stick of that wood . . . though in England it would yield a thousand pounds."<sup>24</sup> This would seem to nullify the thought that the "trees whereon they breed the worms" is a reference to mulberry trees and silkworms, but it does not affect my theme otherwise. *Gage was definitely emphatic about "mulberry trees, silk," in Michoacan!*

In Joseph Smith's day, while the American silkworm craze was going on, William Hickling Prescott began his study of Spanish history. Eventually he tackled the subject of the conquest of Mexico, and hired Spanish scholars to search through their archives to furnish his material. Several references to the use of silk by the natives of Mexico were among the great mass of material he received. Prescott read of vast native libraries, containing books giving the religious and secular history of Mexico's past. When the *padres* learned of the Christian parallels therein, they had made haste to destroy these libraries, and huge bonfires signalized their misplaced zeal. These books had definitely been of pre-Columbian manufacture, and it is of paramount significance that silk was occasionally used in their construction. "Their manuscripts were made of different materials,—of cotton cloth, or skins nicely prepared; of a composition of silk and gum; but for the most part, of a fine fabric from the leaves of the aloë."<sup>25</sup>

Bancroft, the author of *Native Races*, also availing himself of dusty Spanish archives of writings of the Conquest era, found a description of a garment worn by an Indian priest— ". . . around the neck it is embroidered with coarse silk, as in Tehuantepec."<sup>26</sup>

With Spain having cultivated silk, what purpose would have been served in introducing poorer standards to Mexico, and in buying articles of coarse silk afterwards, to send to Spain? Why buy inferior silk, unless as a curiosity to send home, "towels in all colors of silk"? We are faced with the inevitable conclusion that the natives of Mexico, at the time of the Conquest, possessed silk of an uncultivated quality which was nevertheless rich enough to make this "baser sort of people" enticingly dressed.

Could Lehi have brought silkworms to America? No silkworms native to Europe or Asia have been

found here which are not accountable by modern importation. The *Samia cecropia*, *Callosamia promethea*, *Telea polyphemus*, *Automeris io*, or the South American *Rothschildia aurota* (former subject of futile commercial interest) are not found in the other hemisphere. The latter genus "has a number of beautiful species. Its members range from northern South America into the southern United States. *Rothschildia orizaba* and *jorcella* come northward

into Arizona."<sup>27</sup> The *Philosamia cynthia*, on the other hand, is found on both hemispheres, having been brought to America in the 1860's.

It seems at first glance that we are limited to the native varieties of silkworms in attempting to identify the Nephite insect. However, it should be pointed out that some authorities maintain that the Chinese silkworm (*Bombyx mori*) is so domesticated that it would perish under unsupervised conditions. This would lend

## Thus spoke Abraham Lincoln

RICHARD L. EVANS



There is much said concerning Lincoln—but not too much for so sincerely great a subject. He was one of the great among a long list of now immortal men. As to some of his great qualities of character, these were among the many—love, courage, integrity, humility—and there is no real greatness without any of these. As he visited fallen Richmond but a few days before he died, some whose cause he had served, bowed down to him, and some fell at his feet. "This is not right," he said. "You must kneel to God only, and thank him for the liberty you will hereafter enjoy. I am but God's humble instrument. . . ." In a debate with Judge Douglas he said: ". . . Our defense is in the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all men in all lands everywhere. Destroy this spirit and you will have planted the seeds of despotism at your own doors. . . . Whether it is right or wrong to trample on the rights of others—that is the real issue . . . —the eternal struggle between the two principles of right and wrong throughout the world."<sup>2</sup> This, he said in an appraisal of the dignity of people: "It is difficult to make a man miserable while he feels he is worthy of himself and claims kindred to the great God who made him."<sup>3</sup> This, he said, to the nation for which he gave his life: "Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward . . ."<sup>4</sup> ". . . devoutly recognizing . . . Almighty God in all the affairs of men and nations. . . . It is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgression in humble sorrow . . . and to recognize the sublime truth . . . that 'those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.' . . . It behooves us then, to humble ourselves . . . and to pray for clemency and forgiveness. . . . All this being done in sincerity and truth, . . . that the united cry of the nation will be heard on high. . . ."<sup>5</sup> Thus spoke Abraham Lincoln, who lived and died with this prayer and this purpose: ". . . that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom . . . and . . . shall not perish from the earth."<sup>6</sup> God bless his memory, and ever preserve in righteousness the nation for which he was made a martyr.

<sup>1</sup>Jim Bishop, *The Day Lincoln Was Shot*.

<sup>2</sup>Lincoln-Douglas Debates.

<sup>3</sup>Address on Colonization to a Deputation of Colored Men, August 14, 1862.

<sup>4</sup>Letter to Major-General Joseph Hooker, January 26, 1863.

<sup>5</sup>Excerpts from Proclamation, March 30, 1863.

<sup>6</sup>Gettysburg Address.

"The Spoken Word," from Temple Square presented over KSL and the Columbia Broadcasting System, February 11, 1962. Copyright 1962.



credence to the suggestion that a cultivated Nephite species, brought to America, could have perished from neglect in the post-Cumorah period. The extinction of a cultivated European or Asiatic insect is therefore not to be overlooked as a possibility. *Webster's International Dictionary* (second edition) states, "The common domesticated silkworm is the larva of a moth (*Bombyx mori*). . . . It is supposed to be native of China, but has been domesticated for many centuries, and is no longer known in a wild state."

If Lehi did not import silkworms to America, we are at least obliged to demonstrate the plausibility of the Nephites inaugurating the industry here, with the remarkable degree of success noted in the Book of Mormon. Need we fall back on the belief that their discovery of the utility of the cocoon was just a happy accident, and its successful development an unparalleled miracle? What about importation of the *idea*?

Elder Hugh Nibley has demonstrated that Lehi was undoubtedly a merchant having business connections with the merchants of Egypt and other nearby countries. He explains that the presence of two Greek names in the Book of Mormon, *Timothy* and *Lachoneus*, "is strictly in order, however odd it may seem at first glance. Since the fourteenth century BC at latest, Syria and Palestine had been in constant contact with the Aegean world, and since the middle of the seventh century Greek mercenaries and merchants . . . swarmed throughout the near east."<sup>28</sup>

With Lehi in close contact with Greece and Syria, might we expect him to be somewhat conversant with industries in those countries, no less than the case of the Nestorian monks who learned of the origin of Chinese silk? With the value of silk so universally acclaimed in ancient times, and with archaeology showing us that the ancient world knew far more about so many things which we thought unknown to them, can we not suspect that the Syrian silkworm, *Pachypasa otus*, was not unknown in Lehi's day?

Writes one authority, "The Syrian silkworm, *Pachypasa otus*, was a valuable silk-producing insect. The silk was used by the Greeks and

Romans *long* [italics the author's] before the introduction, about AD 550, of the Chinese silkworm. Its silk, which is a beautiful white, competed with that produced with Chinese silkworms until the late 1800's."<sup>29</sup>

The Haskin Service, an information bureau in Washington, D.C., in a communication to the author, states that "The Textile Museum tells us that it is improbable that the kind of silkworm used by the Greeks in the *pre-Christian era* [italics the author's] can be identified, since, so far as is known, there are no silks of that era left. A suggested reference is *The Excavations at Dura-Europos*, Final Report 4, Part 2, Yale University Press."

Dura-Europos was a city on the bank of the Euphrates, now the modern site of Salahiye. It was abandoned to the desert after 257 AD, and excavations first unearthed

#### WHEN MONEY TALKS

BY IDA M. PARDUE

*I close my ear to what it tells:  
Don't want to hear those sad farewells.*

the remains of that era in 1922. Articles of Greek silk were found. A statement from the Department of Classics, Yale University,<sup>30</sup> reads as follows: "Your information is correct: two textiles of silk were found and published as Numbers 263 and 264 in the publication to which you refer."

Another source reveals that the product of the Chinese silkworm was known to the Greek and Roman world, not only before 555 AD, but prior to the Christian era. (We have seen that the popularly conceived history of silk, as typified by the treatise written in England in 1830, is different from that now known. The belief that no nation but the Chinese knew that silk was produced from an insect may be equally false.) "Two centuries before the Christian era, the Chinese carried on a commerce of silk, with Persia, Greece, and Italy."<sup>31</sup> The Persians may have somehow derived from the Chinese the idea of capitalizing on their own variety of silkworm, or developed the idea independently. Regardless, Lehi could have obtained from either

the Greeks or Persians a fundamental understanding of the utility of the cocoon, and brought this knowledge to America. We are reminded of the cynical but true thought that often that which is popularly believed as history is but "a fable which is agreed upon." Archaeology and other research are toppling long-cherished beliefs. To learn that Palestine was articulate culturally with Egypt, Greece, and Syria, in Lehi's day, and that research in silk brings a knowledge of that article closer and closer to Lehi's day, certainly lends credence to the view that with several species of American silkworms awaiting notice in this land, it might have taken no more than this to prompt the Nephites to initiate the industry here. We need not demonstrate that the importation of an Asiatic or European species of silkworm was feasible or possible.

Some silkworms native to America feed on such diverse things as elderberry leaves, oak, birch, grass, corn, etc. John C. Palkister (*The Animal Kingdom*) describes a typical variety thus: "POLYPHEMUS (*Telea polyphemus*) . . . feeds on a great many trees, including birch and oak. . . . The cocoon is solid, and its silk can be readily unreeled, but at too great a cost, in *this country* [italics the author's] for commercial use."<sup>32</sup>

A silkworm imported in the 1860's has become adapted to a number of American trees. Several American silkworms can produce a strand of a quality capable of being made into textiles, although not of a quality demanded by modern commercial taste. Yet, in another era, under different economic standards and conditions, at least one of these might prove capable of producing a fame which could cause a people to "wax proud, because of their exceeding riches, and their fine silks, and their fine-twined linen."

Thomas Gage could have been entirely accurate in designating the trees he saw as "mulberry," in Michoacan. The *World Scope Encyclopedia* (1952) states that "There are about a dozen species of mulberry, native to temperate and subtropical regions, some in Asia, some in America."<sup>33</sup>

An estimate of America's potentialities in its native silkworms was given in 1941. "Millions of yards of  
(Continued on page 342)



(Continued from page 340)

silk produced annually in the United States prove that, if ever the need arises, we have scarcely begun to realize the full benefits of the insect world. . . . We commonly think of silkworms as essentially a Chinese insect; yet here in the United States we have a whole family of Giant Silkworms. Literally the woods are full of them, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The silk spun by some of them is comparable in quality with that of the cultivated silkworm, though somewhat coarser. Various ill-fated attempts have been made to use it commercially. *The main drawback is the high cost of labor.* [Italics the author's.] American labor cannot possibly compete with the

peasants of Japan, China, Spain, and Italy.<sup>34</sup>

International competition clearly places some industries at a disadvantage because of comparative wage scales, but such a handicap was obviously not a factor in ancient America. As a US Government Report on silk (1868) states, "The aptitudes of manufacturing nations change, or are materially modified from time to time."<sup>35</sup> America, now in contact commercially with the other hemisphere, cannot compete with it in the production of silk. Just as in China the silkworm furnished the common article of dress, and as in Gage's seventeenth century Mexico the "baser sort of people" possessed silk so could have successfully developed the silkworm

economics of the Nephite nation, since there were no competitors. The fall of the Nephite culture at Cumorah, with the resulting decline of great arts and sciences, could well have been the death knell of this industry, and of cultivated silkworms of either native or Asiatic origin. The Nephites had been in America about 550 years before the date that silk is mentioned in the account of Mormon. During that length of time a cultivated species of silkworm, derived from native insects, could have been rendered incapable of survival under natural conditions. This would leave only its unmodified relatives remaining as just other worms in the woods.

It is not impossible that American archaeologists may yet unearth samples of pre-Columbian silk. Under favorable conditions it can be preserved for seventeen centuries or longer, as witnessed by the two specimens at Dura-Europos, dating about 257 AD, and two specimens of Chinese silk found by Aurel Stein in a refuse heap west of Tun-huang, dating between AD 67 and 137.<sup>36</sup>

An interesting conjecture might be broached in closing. Lehi might have known silk merchants by the names of *Timothy* and *Lachoneus*. With silk such an esteemed fabric it was common for great respect to be accorded those controlling or supervising the industry. It would be so in the case of early Chinese, Syrian, and Greek silk merchants. The Nephite silk industry was doubtless supervised by specialists in that line, *possibly as a family trade*. In any case, it would be certain to attract men of quality as a secular pursuit. Timothy and Lachoneus were obviously men of quality. Timothy, brother of Nephi, was one of the original twelve American disciples chosen by the Lord.<sup>37</sup> Lachoneus occupied the judgment seat, and in the suggested context it might be emphasized that he was of the same name as his father.<sup>38</sup>

It was customary for the Lord's ministers to earn their living by secular pursuit, for "the priests left their labor to impart the word of God unto the people. . . . And when the priest had imparted unto them the word of God they all returned again diligently unto their labors . . . and they did all labor, every man according to his strength."<sup>39</sup> It is entirely possible that Timothy

## Marriage – love – and solid substance

RICHARD L. EVANS



Marriage is a subject for all seasons, and today we should like to suggest some sentences that apply to marriages in the making as well as to those already made, and would introduce the subject with perhaps a paradoxical statement, or at least one that may be so considered by some, and that is this: that character in marriage is as important as love—and maybe more so. This may seem to slight the matter of romance—to slight somewhat the sweet and tender lovely things of life on which the poets and the songsters have written ten thousand times ten thousand lovely and poetic lines. There is no doubt about the loveliness of sincere, respectful, loyal, honest love, and the real and indispensable and surpassingly important place it has in the good living of life. From all these lovely things we would subtract nothing. But the plain and earnest fact is that love and loveliness will not likely live unless sustained on solid substance. Love is more than music. It is more than moonlight. It is more than mood. It is more than a passing romance. Love, to live, to endure, to last a long and everlasting lifetime, must include some solid, sustaining, basic qualities of character: respect and honesty; integrity and trust and truth; faith and faithfulness, loyalty; and cleanliness, morality; courage and confidence; kindness and consideration; an honest ambition as to something good and useful "to be"; the honoring of obligations; the doing of duty in the day-to-day living of life. And we would say again to all who are married, and to all who approach marriage, and to all who are faced with the soul-searching, far-reaching, sobering decision as to when and how and whom to marry: Love with all its cherished loveliness is likely to survive only as it is sustained by sincere and solid substance, and to keep love alive, character is everlastingly required.

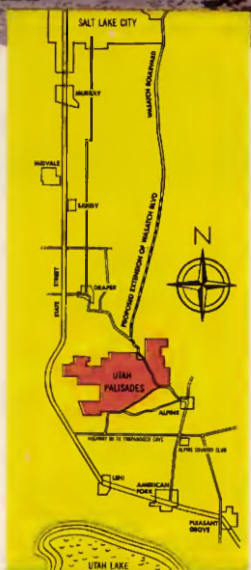
"The Spoken Word," from Temple Square presented over KSL and the Columbia Broadcasting System, February 18, 1962. Copyright 1962.



# YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO INVEST IN UTAH'S FUTURE!



## Utah Palisades Project



### OFFICERS

K. P. ALEXANDER  
L. R. BURTON  
ROBERT W. WOOD  
LAYTON P. OTT  
UNA HIRST

### DIRECTORS

RICHARD PROWS  
MAS YANO

Your best investment in the future is in land which can become ideal suburban homesites in the next few years. Such ideal land is just a short drive southeast from Salt Lake City; spectacularly beautiful Utah Palisades Project. Rolling oak covered slopes offer superb views; topography allows for many kinds of home and estate developments. Similarly planned areas, such as in Los Angeles and Phoenix, have become the most valuable residential areas in those cities.

Ten years ago, many of Salt Lake valley's finest residential developments along the bench didn't exist. But look at them today. Imagine what it would mean to you today if you owned 5 acres of that land. Now... let's look to the logical development of our most beautiful valley area to the southeast. Utah Palisades Project is the very heart of it. You can buy five acres for just \$5,550... twenty years to pay, if you wish. This is less than most desirable single building lots... and this is a five acre tract!

Utah Palisades has guaranteed that all ground can be developed, due to terrain, and buyers have a 90 day period to inspect and trade for another tract if not satisfied.

Mail coupon below for complete details.

and Lachoneus were executives in the Nephite silk industry, and that their Greek names had some historical connotation thereto.

When the voice of Joseph Smith revealed that the Chinese were not the only possessors of silk in 84 BC, and that it was used by the ancients of America, he was contradicting the opinions of contemporary English silk historians. English-speaking people universally believed that the American Indians had never had an illustrious past, and had never been more than makers of arrowheads and crude pottery. Although Gage's autobiography had been popular in England through six editions, up to 1711, the English treatise on silk (1831) omits mention of Mexican silk. Despite an American edition of Gage's work, published in New Jersey in 1758, and also serialized in the *New American Magazine* in the same year, it was not marked by popularity in this country enough to keep it free from a century's accumulation of dust. Today the only surviving series of the magazine mentioned is in a library in Philadelphia. Access to the 1758 edition, by Joseph Smith, in 1830, as source material for a fraudulent Book of Mormon, is reasonably improbable, weighing all the conditions of the prophet's life up to that time. The zest with which opponents of Mormonism grasped at *Manuscript Lost* as Smith's source of ideas was never brought to the issue of "silk" in the Book of Mormon. The autobiography of Gage certainly makes mention of nothing else which could have helped Joseph Smith in writing a fraudulent Book of Mormon. Gage makes no mention whatever of ancient ruins or the extent of the ancient cultures or of the legends of the natives relevant thereto or of any account of a Spanish *padre* concerning the same. The autobiography was gathering dust deep enough so as not to be noticed by the scholarly detractors of the Mormon prophet, and let it not be said that they were not energetically hunting!

With divine prerogative the Book of Mormon intruded into the existing vacuum of ancient American history, and supplied as revealed facts many things which have been ridiculed by "experts" during the past 130 years and more, simply because these unique claims were presented

LeR Burton  
138 South 2nd East  
Salt Lake City, Utah

☐ Please send complete details contained in your free, full-color brochure. I understand I am under no obligation.

☐ Please send contract for my approval. I have enclosed \$50.00 Earnest Money as down payment for 5 acres in the Utah Palisades, which \$50.00 will be cheerfully and promptly refunded if I decide not to buy.

Name .....  
Street .....  
City .....  
State .....

**CLIP AND  
MAIL TODAY!**



by a man claiming to be a prophet of God. Since the Book of Mormon was unearthed at Hill Cumorah much archaeological and other evidence has risen from the dust to vindicate the prophet.

Most certainly we expect a prophet to be right—and the Prophet said "silk!"

#### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup>Alma 4:6.
- <sup>2</sup>*The Cabinet Encyclopedia (Treatise on silk* by G. R. Porter) London, 1831.
- <sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.
- <sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 14.
- <sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 22.
- <sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 35.
- <sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 31.
- <sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 33.
- <sup>9</sup>*Report to the Department of State on Silk and Silk Manufacture*—Elliot C. Cowdin, United States Commission, Washington, D.C., 1868, p. 14.
- <sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 17.
- <sup>11</sup>*Treatise (op. cit.)* p. 35.
- <sup>12</sup>*Scientific American*—"An American Parallel to the Tulip Craze in Holland"—Irving N. Townsend (Dec. 6, 1902) p. 373.
- <sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 373.
- <sup>14</sup>*Thomas Gage's Travels in the New World*, J. Eric S. Thompson, Editor. (1958) University of Oklahoma Press, p. 90.
- <sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, Intro. p. xxi.
- <sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 110.
- <sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 50.
- <sup>18</sup>Duell, Sloan, & Pierce, N.Y., 1st Edition, Vol. I, p. 44.
- <sup>19</sup>*Travels (op. cit.)* pp. 140-141.
- <sup>20</sup>*Travels (op. cit.)* p. 73.
- <sup>21</sup>Cochineal dye is a variable product, as is silk. The author had hoped to demonstrate that it was not variable, in hopes of supporting the possibility that the reference by Gage was to mulberry trees and silkworms, but an inquiry to the Haskin Service resulted in a reference from the *Encyclopedia Americana*, indicates otherwise. "The principal district in which they (the cochineal insects) are now reared is in the province of Oaxaca, Mexico, those of the district of Mestique being considered the best insects."
- <sup>22</sup>*Travels (op. cit.)* pp. 148-149.
- <sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 149.
- <sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 205-206.
- <sup>25</sup>*Conquest of Mexico*—Prescott, Vol. I, p. 102.
- <sup>26</sup>*Native Races*—Bancroft, Vol. I, p. 650.
- <sup>27</sup>*The Animal Kingdom* (John C. Pallister in) Greystone Press, Vol. III, p. 1934.
- <sup>28</sup>*Lehi in the Desert*—Nibley (Bookcraft) p. 34.
- <sup>29</sup>*The Animal Kingdom*, p. 1943.
- <sup>30</sup>C. Bradford Welles.
- <sup>31</sup>Elliot C. Cowdin (*op. cit.*) p. 5.
- <sup>32</sup>*The Animal Kingdom (op. cit.)* p. 1931.
- <sup>33</sup>Vol. III.
- <sup>34</sup>*Natural History*, Jan. 1941, pp. 19-20.
- <sup>35</sup>Elliot C. Cowdin (*op. cit.*) p. 20.
- <sup>36</sup>*The Roman Orient and the Far East*—C. G. Seligman, Annual Report Smithsonian Institute, 1938, p. 554.
- <sup>37</sup>3 Nephi 19:4.
- <sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 6:19.
- <sup>39</sup>Alma 1:26.



**The stabilizer-equipped Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary—by far the world's largest superliners—offer five-day express crossings to and from Europe! No other form of transportation provides as much.**

Last year, over 100,000 passengers sailed to and from Europe, aboard the Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary. Here is a true tribute to the luxury, speed, travel value, and fun of these two superliners—the world's largest. When you travel to Europe, sail aboard the "Queens"—or any of five other Cunard liners in regular service from New York and Canada.

**Cunard also offers a year-round cruise program to suit every season, taste and budget.**

Luxurious cruises aboard the fast, elegant, air-conditioned Caronia and Mauretania take you to enchanting ports throughout the world. The program includes cruises to the Mediterranean in Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring; to the North Cape in Summer; Around the World, or to the West Indies and South America in Winter.

GETTING THERE IS HALF THE FUN! GO

**CUNARD**

SEE YOUR TRAVEL AGENT!



Please send me, without obligation:

☐ Brochure on travel to Europe. I am interested in sailing First Class \_\_\_\_\_ Cabin \_\_\_\_\_ Tourist \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Brochures on the following cruises:

(Write in Name of Cruise and season)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zone \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

The name of my travel agent is \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this coupon to Cunard Line, 210 Post St., San Francisco • EX 2-1307