



BOOK OF MORMON CENTRAL

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Type: Newsletter

Insights, Vol. 14, No. 1 (January 1994)

Editor(s): FARMS Staff

Published by: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies



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The Foundation for
Ancient Research
& Mormon Studies

INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

1994, No. 1

"...by study and also by faith." D & C 88:118

January

F.A.R.M.S. Lectures Draw Crowds; Other Lectures Are Scheduled

Lectures, firesides, and other presentations sponsored by the Foundation have drawn considerable interest recently, and new ones are planned.

New Lectures Available on Video

The first ten videos in the new F.A.R.M.S. Book of Mormon video lecture series are now available. They bring to students of the scriptures everywhere some of the best lectures on the Book of Mormon. See the back of the order form for details.

Oaks Lecture Available

A transcript of the remarks made by Elder Dallin H. Oaks at the annual F.A.R.M.S. banquet is now available (see the order form). In that talk Elder Oaks discussed aspects of the historicity of the Book of Mormon and the relationships between scholarship, faith, and revelation. We appreciate Elder Oaks's kindness both in speaking to our gathering and in giving permission to make this transcript available to friends of the Book of Mormon who were not able to attend the banquet or who did attend and want a printed version of the talk to study in more detail.

Dead Sea Scroll Scholar to Visit BYU

Emanuel Tov, an eminent Dead Sea Scrolls scholar who is professor of Bible Studies at Hebrew University and Editor-in-chief of the Dead Sea Scrolls publication project, will present a F.A.R.M.S.-sponsored lecture at BYU on February 22 in the Varsity Theatre at 12:00 noon. He will visit F.A.R.M.S. and BYU to consult on the Dead Sea Scrolls electronic database, a joint F.A.R.M.S.-BYU project reported on in the last issue of *Insights*.

Recent Firesides

In November Noel Reynolds spoke at a regional conference of young adults in San Antonio about recent research on the Book of Mormon and other F.A.R.M.S. board members spoke at a fireside sponsored by the Maclean Stake in Virginia, coordinated by Lou and Barbara Cramer.

Truman Madsen shared with Saints gathered at a F.A.R.M.S. fireside in San Diego his thoughts on scriptural prophecies of a new temple to be built in Jerusalem (where Madsen has spent the last 2 years), including when and where it will be built, who will build it and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

BYU Library Consolidates Egyptian Collection with the Help of F.A.R.M.S.

Thanks to a donation from F.A.R.M.S., the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University has moved more than half of the Samuel A. B. Mercer Egyptology collection from various locations in the open stacks in the library to the Ancient Studies Library. According to Gary Gillum, the BYU Ancient Studies librarian, the collection will be more secure and protected in that location and will receive better use as a collection.

Hugh Nibley was partly respon-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Nibley Broadcast Resumes

Semester 4 of Hugh Nibley's Honors Book of Mormon class will be broadcast on Sundays at 5:00 P.M. by KBYU-TV (channel 11) beginning January 2. At the completion of semester 4, KBYU plans to start over with semester 1, probably at a different time—watch future issues of *Insights* for details.

Broadcast of the class in the Seattle area has been interrupted for a few months, but will resume (details will be announced locally).



F.A.R.M.S. UPDATE

The Foundation for Ancient Research & Mormon Studies

Number 92

January 1994

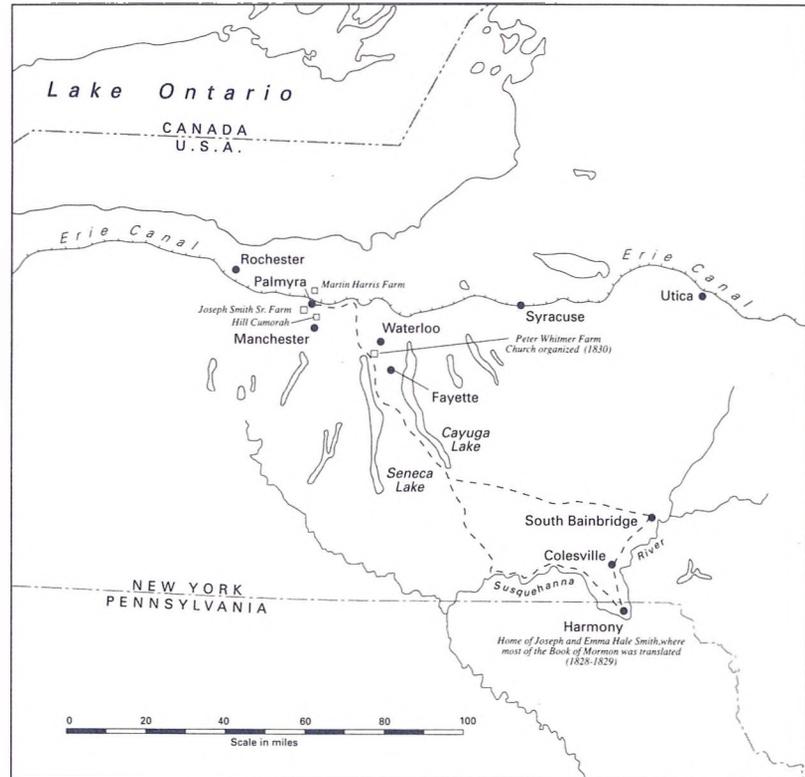
Was There a Library in Harmony, Pennsylvania?

IN 1982, ERICH ROBERT PAUL published an article in *BYU Studies* entitled "Joseph Smith and the Manchester (New York) Library." Essentially Paul shows that, while Joseph had potential access to a wide range of books there, "it is likely that during the 1820s he simply was not a part of the literary culture." This article has long been available as a F.A.R.M.S. Reprint.

Because Joseph Smith spent little time, however, in the area of Manchester/Palmyra from 1825 to 1829 (he moved to Harmony, Pennsylvania, in 1827 when he and Emma married), the logical extension of Paul's study is to ask the further question, "But was there a library in Harmony, Pennsylvania?"

Even more significant than the information environment of Palmyra was that of Harmony. If Joseph Smith had wanted to do any kind of research while he was translating the book of Lehi onto the 116 pages in 1828 or while he was translating the bulk of the Book of Mormon during April and May, 1829, he would have needed to use libraries or information sources in or around Harmony where he was living at the time.

Harmony was a small town on the border between the states of New York and Pennsylvania. The region was very remote and rural. Recently we asked Erich Paul if he had ever explored the possibility that any libraries existed around Harmony in the 1820s which Joseph



Church history sites in western New York, 1820-1831.

BYU Geography Department

Smith might have used. He responded: "In fact, I checked into this possibility only to discover that not only does Harmony and its environs hardly exist anymore, but there is no evidence of a library even existing at the time of Joseph's work."

Accordingly, those who have considered western New York as the information environment for the Book of Mormon may be 120 miles or more off target. One should think of Joseph translating in the Harmony area and, as far as that goes, in a resource vacuum.

Even if Joseph had wanted to

pause to check his details against reputable sources, to scrutinize the latest theories, to learn about scholarly biblical interpretations or Jewish customs, or to verify any Book of Mormon claims against the wisdom or theologies of his day—even if he had wanted to go to a library to check such things (something he showed no inclination to do until later)—there simply was no library anywhere nearby for him to use.

While this is only a piece of circumstantial evidence for the Book of Mormon, it is still a piece. Perhaps a significant one.

Based on research by John W. Welch

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

F.A.R.M.S. Lectures and Firesides

administer within it, and what will be performed therein; and on connections between the temple and the Atonement. He pointed out ways in which temple ordinances "are designed to penetrate all levels of our consciousness, to dig into our frail flesh, and to melt and meld our hearts into oneness with ourselves, each other, and with him," and thus they create true at-one-ment through the power of Christ's sacrifice. (His talk will be published in May by F.A.R.M.S. and Deseret Book in a volume on the temple.) The fireside was sponsored by the Penasquitos Stake and coordinated by Peter and Sherri Knobloch, with the cooperation of Bishop Roger Platt and President Michael Jensen.

F.A.R.M.S. Helps Provo Ward Study Book of Mormon

The Provo Grandview 4th ward, in which two F.A.R.M.S. board members reside, recently enlisted the help of the Foundation in their efforts to accept President Benson's challenge to study the Book of Mormon.

"The world will prove Joseph Smith a true prophet by circumstantial evidence, in experiments, as they did Moses and Elijah."

—*Times and Seasons* *

*3 (September 15, 1842): 922, quoted in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, Joseph Fielding Smith, comp. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), 267.

For the past three years, Bishop Robert Walz has led his ward in reading the Book of Mormon in 60 days during November and December. He challenges each ward member to read 10 pages each day, then on Sunday the topic for each class in Sunday School, priesthood, and Relief Society focuses on the pages read that week.

This year, to provide another dimension to the learning, Bishop Walz invited F.A.R.M.S. to provide a fireside speaker each Sunday evening during the weeks of reading. Five board members participated in giving lectures, plus Royal Skousen of the BYU English Department, Jim Faulconer of the BYU Philosophy Department, and Ed Pinegar, former President of the Missionary Training Center.

On Christmas Eve the ward met together to read the final chapter of the Book of Mormon, to pray together, and to make a commitment to remember what they had read.

While we regret that F.A.R.M.S. board members cannot provide such a series of lectures in all wards and stakes, any ward and any individual can benefit from the same kinds of information by taking advantage of the F.A.R.M.S. Book of Mormon video lecture series. Masters of this video series can also be made available for local broadcast; call the F.A.R.M.S. office for details.

Annual Symposium

The annual F.A.R.M.S. symposium for 1994 is not yet scheduled, but details will be given in future issues of *Insights*.

Egyptology Collection Moved

sible for BYU's acquisition of the Mercer collection over 35 years ago. Even though Mercer wrote several Egyptological articles attacking the authenticity of the book of Abraham, Nibley considered him a man of great courtesy and kindness and helped arrange for BYU to purchase "his splendid Egyptian library, the fruit of a long lifetime of diligent collecting." John Gee, pursuing graduate studies in Egyptology Yale, told Gillum that with the Mercer collection BYU has one of the finest Egyptology collections in the United States.

The collection moved to Ancient Studies numbers over 500 volumes, many of which are hard to find at any other library. The Foundation provided funds to carry out the relocation and to purchase over 100 new shelves for the books.

Last Chance for February Israel Tour

There is still time to sign up for the tour to the Holy Land that F.A.R.M.S. has arranged through Educational Opportunities, a tax-exempt organization sponsoring educational travel, but only if you call right away. The ten-day tour will be enhanced with solid information, some of it supplied by daily lectures from F.A.R.M.S. board member Jack Welch. For details, call the F.A.R.M.S. office without delay.

Book of Mormon Class Taught in, and about, the Land of Jerusalem

"The Book of Mormon in the Land of Jerusalem" is the title of a new course in Book of Mormon studies offered at the BYU Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies in Israel. The course was developed and is taught by Jeffrey R. Chadwick, Near Eastern specialist at the Jerusalem Center. Dr. Chadwick is also preparing a book manuscript with the same title.

The course was taken by 50 students during Winter Semester 1993 and 75 during Fall 1993. According to the class outline, the course goals are "to learn about the people, places, events, and doctrines of the Book of Mormon, with emphasis on the books of 1 Nephi through Jacob, where the Near Eastern roots of the Small Plates of Nephi are most in evidence." In this effort, students study findings from the fields of ar-

chaeology, geography, and history, as well as languages such as Hebrew and Egyptian.

In his introduction to the study guide, Chadwick explains that "the Book of Mormon is often called 'America's witness for Christ,' and such it is. But most readers do not realize that it is really *two* different books. One, the abridgment done by Mormon and Moroni (Mosiah through Moroni), is clearly the product of the ancient American Nephite culture. But the other, the Small Plates of Nephi (1 Nephi through Omni), was heavily influenced by the Near Eastern origin of Lehi, Nephi, and Jacob. Even though the Small Plates were composed in ancient America, their culture, doctrine, and languages were from the ancient Near East—the Land of Jerusalem."

1993 Updates Present Latest Research

What does the influence of Viking metal working on the inhabitants of the New World tell us about the Book of Mormon? Were any Book of Mormon names still used by peoples in ancient America after Book of Mormon times? What

significance did the sword of Laban have to the Nephites and to Joseph Smith? What can we learn from the differences between the visions of Lehi and Nephi? Can the 1834 affidavits attacking the Joseph Smith family be trusted? What did B. H. Roberts say about the Book of Mormon in *The Truth, the Way, the Life?*

The 6 F.A.R.M.S. Updates published in *Insights* during 1993 give the most up-to-date information related to these questions. The collection, available on the order form mailed with this issue, is a handy compilation for regular readers and a great way to introduce your friends to F.A.R.M.S. and to the latest in Book of Mormon research.

Thanks!

We appreciate very much the generous donations made by faithful supporters of the Foundation at the year's end and throughout the year. Your generosity makes the work of the Foundation possible.

INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

Published by the
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 P.O. Box 7113, University Station
 Provo, UT 84602
 1-800-327-6715

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The Purpose of F.A.R.M.S.

The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S.) encourages and supports research about the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ, and other ancient scriptures.

F.A.R.M.S. is a nonprofit educational foundation, independent of all other organizations. Its main research interests include ancient history, language, literature, culture, geography, politics, and law relevant to the scriptures. Although such subjects are of secondary importance when compared with the spiritual and eternal messages of the scriptures, solid research and academic perspectives alone can supply certain kinds of useful information, even if only tentatively, concerning many significant and interesting questions about the scriptures.

The Foundation works to make interim and final reports about this research available widely, promptly, and economically. As a service to teachers and students of the scriptures, research results are distributed both in scholarly and popular formats.

It is hoped that this information will help all interested people to "come unto Christ" (Jacob 1:7) and to understand and take more seriously these ancient witnesses of the atonement of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

Book of Mormon Video Lecture Series

The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies has captured on film some of the best lectures on the Book of Mormon by some of BYU's finest faculty members and other respected teachers. These lecturers present the latest research on the Book of Mormon and the lecturers' firm testimonies on their favorite chapters or subjects in the Book of Mormon. This outstanding video series brings these lectures into the homes and classrooms of students of the scriptures everywhere.

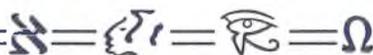
The first 10 lectures are offered as the special feature in this issue. Thanks to generous donations, this series is available very inexpensively. In addition, during this special each tape ordered will be accompanied by a *free* transcript. A further discount is available to CES seminaries and institutes.

Take advantage of this opportunity to learn at the feet of some of the finest Book of Mormon scholars, and watch for more lectures to be featured in future issues of *Insights*.

- Susan E. Black, "Christ in the Book of Mormon"
- Larry E. Dahl, "Faith, Hope, and Charity"
- Robert L. Millet, "The Nature of God in the Book of Mormon"
- Ed Pinegar, "Missionary Work and the Book of Mormon"
- Noel B. Reynolds, "The Gospel as Taught by the Nephites"
- Stephen D. Ricks, "The Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon"
- Royal Skousen, "The Critical Text of the Book of Mormon"
- M. Catherine Thomas, "Reading the Book of Mormon and Personal Revelation"
- John A. Tvedtnes, "Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon"
- John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon"

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All 10 tapes and transcripts (10% off)	\$72.00
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J-93b	Stephen D. Ricks, ed., <i>Journal of Book of Mormon Studies</i> , 2/2, Fall 1993, 220 pp.		\$7.95	
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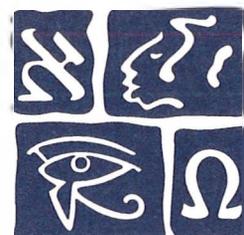
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 Provo, UT 84602
 (801) 378-3295
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 FAX (801) 378-3724