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Archaeology and the Book of Mormon, Part V: White Indians—continued

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Abstract: This series is a comprehensive compilation of archaeological artifacts in Mesoamerica that relate to Book of Mormon places and peoples. It is copiously illustrated with photographs of buildings, pottery, statues, and carvings. The series includes evidences of Christ's appearance to the Americas and reviews ancient Mayan writings, including *Title of the Lords of Totonicapan*, the *Popol Vuh*, the *Annals of the Cakchiquels*, and the *Works of Ixtlilxochitl*. The author also discusses white and dark people in ancient America. The fifth part continues the discussion of "white Indians."



Louisa Blue, a white, full-blooded Catawba Indian, with her daughter-in-law, Sister Arnold Blue. Louisa is wife of the Catawba chief.

ARCHAEOLOGY and the BOOK OF MORMON

by President Milton R. Hunter

OF THE FIRST COUNCIL OF THE SEVENTY

Part V White Indians—continued

IN THE LAST issue of THE IMPROVEMENT ERA (August, 1955), *White Indians* were discussed, showing that the first white men who contacted various Indian tribes reported the discovery of certain numbers of white Indians among their darker-skinned contemporaries. The writer concluded that the Nephites of Book of Mormon days could have been at least partially responsible for the white Indians and that the Lamanites of the same historical period constituted the primary progenitors of the

red, bronze, or darker-colored Indians.

This article will present considerably more evidence, showing that "in many parts of the New World there are white Indians. . . ."¹

Paul Herrmann, a German scholar, described the famous Doña Marina, who for many years was Fernando Cortes' ". . . truest comrade and the only trustworthy companion of his triumphant life,"² as ". . . a light-

skinned princess exiled by Montezuma, a member of the imperial house."³ The same author wrote:

The white Indians of Venezuela, who still exist, are mentioned in the chronicles of the Spanish conquerors, and the Boroanos Indians on the Rio Imperial of Chile were known to the conquistadores as "white Indians."⁴

Francisco Pizarro and those who assisted him in the conquest of Peru were surprised to find that many of the Indians of that land, especially those of the ruling class, were white and remarkably beautiful. In speaking of the Spanish conquistadores, Herrmann wrote:

. . . They were most deeply impressed, however, by the large number of fair and white-skinned people they met amongst the Inca Ayllus, the Peruvian aristocracy. In particular, the *coyas*, the ladies of the great Inca families, seem in many cases to have looked exactly like European women. Pedro Pizarro, a cousin of the conqueror of Peru, writes of them with positive consternation in his *Story of the Discovery and Conquest of Peru*. These princesses were neat and clean, stately, and beautiful to behold, he reports. They considered themselves well-formed, and were so in fact. "These people are corn-blond," continues Pizarro. "Some of the ladies and gentlemen were actually whiter than Spaniards. I saw one woman with her child here of a whiteness such as is seldom seen. The Indians believe such people to be children of the *idos*, the gods."⁵

When one recalls the splendor of the nobility of the Spanish court at the time of Charles V and Philip II and the ideals of beauty as depicted in Spanish paintings of that period, it is evident that Pedro Pizarro's conception of beauty would differ little if any from ours.

. . . At all events, the haughty grandees of Castile, so proud of their noble birth, married the blond Inca princesses in large numbers, regarding them as their equals in birth and presenting them to their Spanish Majesties at court in Madrid. Two generations later, in 1603, a petition for tax relief signed by 567 representatives of old Inca families was presented to the crown of Spain. This speaks volumes—and in favor of Pedro Pizarro.⁶

The Catholic missionaries who visited Peru during the colonial period were amazed at the many similarities of the Indians' religious beliefs and Christianity; for example, they found symbols of the Trinity before Peruvian altars, a rainbow legend, and a

¹Paul Herrmann, *Conquest by Man* (New York, 1954), p. 175.
²*Ibid.*, p. 167.

³*Ibid.*, p. 166.
⁴*Ibid.*, p. 175.
⁵*Ibid.*, p. 184.
⁶*Ibid.*, p. 185.

flood story.⁷ Paul Herrmann concludes that the latter two "... might have come straight from the Book of Genesis."⁸ They probably did, but not directly through the Spanish Catholic missionaries. Their origin would date back probably more than a thousand years prior to the discovery of America. When one recalls the fact that the Nephites—the ancestors of the white Indians of Peru—possessed the Brass Plates which contained Genesis and the other Old Testament books to and including part of Jeremiah's writings,⁹ as well as the gospel of Jesus Christ which they had received directly from the lips of the resurrected Savior,¹⁰ it is easy to account for the fact that even before Catholic missionaries had influenced their thinking, the Indians of Peru possessed religious teachings which reminded the padres of similar doctrine found in the Bible.

Not only did the historians and Spanish missionaries report discoveries of white Indians in Peru and other South American countries, but also Catholic missionaries and explorers of the colonial period noted in their journals that they, too, had visited white Indians in Central and North America; for example, the eminent Parde Bernardino de Sahagun, born in Spain (1499) and a missionary in Mexico among the Indians from 1529 to 1590, wrote an important and scholarly work entitled *History of the Things of New Spain*, which is accredited as being among the most reliable and comprehensive reports concerning the ancients of Middle America. He described the Huastecas (Guastecas), a Maya-speaking people who lived on the lowlands of northern Vera Cruz and the adjacent foothills of San Luis Potosi, as a white people. To quote:

All of them, men and women, are white and of good and well-proportioned faces and good features; their language is very different from the others [of the central mesa and northern gulf-coast of Mexico], ... And they are very expert and good officers of song; they dance gracefully and with beautiful movements.

These lived in good breeding, because the men wore good clothes and mantles; they wear shoes, jewels and beads around the neck and feathers and they have fans and amulets and they are curiously shaved. They look at themselves in mirrors and their women put on painted and elegant skirts and blouses. They are polished and expert

in everything because they said they were Guastecas; ...¹¹

It is apparent from Padre Sahagun's description that these white Indians retained many of the characteristics of their ancestors—the Nephites—who were throughout most of their history "... white, and exceedingly fair and delightful,"¹² being a superior, intelligent, industrious, moral, and god-fearing people;¹³ while their darker-skinned brethren—the Lamanites—"were ... an idle people, full of mischief and subtlety,"¹⁴ "... wild and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people, full of idolatry and filthiness,"¹⁵ delighting in wars and bloodshed, and during much of their history of Book of Mormon days, hav-



Chief S. T. Blue and his wife, Louisa.

ing a burning hatred against the Nephites.¹⁶

In 1696-1697 A.D. Padre Andres de Avendano y Loyola, a noble Catholic priest, visited a surviving remnant of the former inhabitants of Chichén Itzá at Tayasal, on an island in the Lake Peten, Guatemala. He described the skin color of those people as follows:

These Ytzeas are well-featured and, like mestizoes, nearly all of a *light complexion* and of very perfect stature, and of natural gifts.¹⁷

Not only were white Indians found south of the Rio Grande, but various

groups have been encountered north of the Mexican border also; for example, the early explorers who came by sea to the northwestern coast of North America described in their journals the skin color of many of the Indians whom they visited as being as white as the skin color of the average native of Europe. Since many of the present day Indians have mixtures of white blood, it is a significant fact that these early voyagers—like the explorers of Mexico and Central America—saw many Indian tribes before they had opportunity to intermarry with white people from the Old World. Captain James Cook, the European discoverer in 1784 of the Nootka Indians who lived on the ocean side of Vancouver Island, recorded in his journal regarding the natives who were not covered with red paint that

... the whiteness of their skin appeared almost equal to that of Europeans; though rather of that pale effete cast which distinguished those of our southern nations. The children whose skins had never been stained with paint, also equalled ours in whiteness.¹⁸

Later in his journal, Captain Cook described the Indian tribes which he met in Prince William's Sound, Alaska, as follows:

The complexion of some of the women and some of the children is white, but without any mixture of red.¹⁹

Captain G. Dixon visited the northwestern Pacific Coast (1785-1788) and made the following statement regarding the Indians:

In regards to their complexion, it is not easy to determine what cast that is; but if I may judge from the few people I saw tolerably clean, these Indians are very little darker than the Europeans in general.²⁰

In 1798, Captain George Vancouver, in whose honor the principal island has been named, described as follows the Indians he saw along the Burke Channel in the heart of the northwestern coast:

The prominence of their countenances and the regularity of their features resembled the northern Europeans. [If it were not for all the oil and paint] ... there is great reason to believe that their colour would have differed but little from such of the laboring

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¹⁸James Cook, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean* (London, 1784), vol. 2, p. 303.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 367.

²⁰C. Dixon, *A Voyage Round the World, but more Particularly of the North West Coast of America Performed in 1785-88* (London, 1789), p. 238.

¹¹Sahagun, "Historia de las Cosas de Nueva España," *Libro Noveno, Capitulo 29*, Sec. 7, cited in Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon* (Oakland, Calif., 1950), p. 247.

¹²Nephi 5:21.

¹³*Ibid.*, 5:9-20.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 5:24.

¹⁵Enos 1:20.

¹⁶Jacob 7:24.

¹⁷Andres de Avendano y Loyola, *Relacion de las dos Entradas que hizo a Peten Ytza* (1697), Eng. tr. by Philip Ainsworth Means, cited in Means, *History of the Conquest of Yucatan and of the Itzas* (New York, 1917), p. 22.

⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 184-187.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁹1 Nephi 5:10-14.

¹⁰3 Nephi, chapters 11-28.

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Europeans, as are constantly exposed to the inclemency and alterations of the weather.²¹

Regarding the Haida Indians of Queen Charlotte Island, Hubert Howe Bancroft in 1875 reported that "The few who have seen their faces free from paint pronounce their complexion light. . . ."²² Bancroft then quoted Poole, who claimed that he observed that their skin was "nearly as white as ours,"²³ and Bendel, who held it to be "of a remarkable light color."²⁴ Gilbert Malcolm Sproat maintained that "Their young women's skins are as clear and white as those of Englishwomen."²⁵ Horatio Hale found some of those coastal islanders "fair in complexion, sometimes with ruddy cheeks."²⁶ Speaking of the Haidas, Niblack (1888) wrote:

In complexion both sexes are surprisingly light colored. This is in no way due to intermixture with whites. . . . The Haidas are markedly fairer skinned than the others. . . .²⁷

Ordinarily the hair of the American Indian is straight, coarse, and black, but it has been observed by various writers that the white Indians' hair oftentimes diverges from the norm, being soft and wavy, and sometimes auburn and brown in color.²⁸ A. C. Haddon pointed out that the hair of the northwestern Indians ". . . is frequently slightly wavy and brownish . . . there are a few tribes among whom red hair and an almost white complexion occur."²⁹ According to Thor Heyerdahl, Gilbert M. Sproat described

. . . a local Indian woman who had "curly, or rather wavy, brown hair," pointed out that: "Now and then, but rarely, a light-haired native is seen"; . . . and Sutil y Mexicana, who declared that the hair of these aboriginals "varied in colour between reddish, dark, auburn, and black."³⁰

White Indians have been found in other parts of the United States, as well as on the northwestern Pacific

coast region. The best example is the Mandan Indians who during the colonial period inhabited the whole area of the states of North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. White farmers did not settle this district until the middle of last century, "shortly after the Mandan had been wiped out by a small-pox epidemic."³¹ When the whites first discovered the Mandan Indians, according to Paul Herrmann,

. . . About a fifth of this strange people were white-skinned and blue-eyed. Fair hair was also not infrequent, and the physiognomy of all Mandan was entirely different from that of the usual Indian type.³²

Early during the seventeenth century rumors of a tribe of white Indians (the Mandans), who lived many miles away in the western wilderness, reached the Atlantic seaboard explorers; for example, as early as 1615 Father Champlain wrote in his journal about them. Later Jean Nicolet expected to find white Indians on his trip westward. But probably the first white man actually to see them was de la Verandrye, a French Canadian fur trader and explorer. He visited the Mandan Indians in 1738, and became intimately acquainted with them. This personal contact makes his report historically valuable. Verandrye states in his diary:

. . . This tribe is partly white and partly red-skinned. The women are extremely beautiful, especially those who are white,

³¹Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 176.

DESERT SYMPHONY

By Leona Bammes Gardner

GRAY rocks keeping their silent watch.
Gray sand
Whipped by the dust-gray wind. Joshua
trees
Lifting their hairy arms in the torrid breeze.
Gray clouds above gray hills; a desolate
land

Where small gray snakes under cool gray
stones withstand
The blistering heat; and lying in the sun,
Gray lizards blink, then seek oblivion
Beneath gray bushes, by gray rabbits
scanned.

But when the sun touches the western hills,
Suffused with peach and gold, a cotton boll
Of clouds mirrors a rainbow. Yucca spills
Fragrance from creamy spikes. An aureole
Of pink and copper rings the cactus quills
And wraps the ragged rocks in a purple
stole.

some of whom have lovely fair hair. Both men and women are very industrious and work with a will. Their lodges are big and spacious; they are divided into several rooms by partitions of thick planks. . . . The men are tall, strong and courageous. They are very active, and of good appearance with pleasant features. Their women do not look in the least Indian.³³

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, an American, George Catlin, spent considerable time wandering among these Indians and studying them. He wrote:

The Mandans are certainly a very interesting and pleasing people in their personal appearance and manners; differing in many respects, both in looks and customs, from all other tribes which I have seen. . . .

. . . and so forcibly have I been struck with the peculiar ease and elegance of these people, together with the diversity of complexions, the various colours of their hair and eyes; the singularity of their language, and their peculiar and unaccountable customs, that I am fully convinced that they have sprung from some other origin than that of the other North American tribes. . . .

A stranger in the Mandan village is first struck by the different shades of complexion, and various colours of hair which he sees crowd about him; and he is at once almost disposed to exclaim that "these are not Indians."

There are a great many of these people whose complexions appear as light as half breeds; and amongst the women particularly, there are many whose skins are almost white, with the most pleasing symmetry and proportion of features; with hazel, with grey, and with blue eyes—with mildness and sweetness of expression, and excessive modesty of demeanour, which render them exceedingly pleasing and beautiful.³⁴

Writers have speculated regarding the origin of the white Mandan Indians. Catlin suggested "that the Mandan might be descended from the Welsh king, Madoc. . . ."³⁵ Some writers have suggested Irish settlers while others have felt that the Scandinavian Vikings were responsible for the white blood among the Mandan Indians. It may be true that occasionally groups of Europeans came to America and intermarried with the Mandan Indians, but Paul Herrmann doubts that there would have been a sufficient number of Welsh, Irish, or Vikings, settle in this land, according to available information, to completely account for the white blood in the Mandans. To quote Herrmann:

. . . and furthermore, only a handful of men, whose biological force cannot have

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³³Verandrye, cited in *ibid.*, p. 177.

³⁴George Catlin, *The North American Indians*, . . . written during eight years travel amongst the wildest tribes of Indians in North America, 1832-1839 (Edinburgh, 1826), cited in Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 179.

²¹George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Around the World* (London, 1798), vol. 2, p. 262.

²²Hubert Howe Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States* (New York, 1875), vol. 1, p. 157.

²³Francis Poole, *Queen Charlotte Islands* (London, 1872), cited in *Idem*.

²⁴Bendel, cited in *Idem*.

²⁵Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life* (London, 1868), p. 24.

²⁶Horatio Hale, *Ethnography and Philology* (Philadelphia, 1846), cited in Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

²⁷Niblack, cited in Thor Heyerdahl, *American Indians of the Pacific* (New York, 1952), p. 83.

²⁸Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

²⁹A. C. Haddon, *The Races of Man and the Distribution* (New York, 1924), pp. 33, 128.

³⁰Sproat, cited in Heyerdahl, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

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sufficed to Europeanize a whole Indian tribe. But the clear traces of European [white] blood which the Mandan are said to have exhibited in 1750 cannot have been the outcome of a relatively fleeting contact with the white men; they must have sprung from some much more profound intermingling. What great adventure, what tragedy lies be-

hind this strange and now vanishing tribe? We do not know.³⁰

If Herrmann's conclusions are correct, one needs to look elsewhere to find the cause of the white Mandan

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³⁰Herrmann, op. cit., p. 179.

"Thou inquirest what liberty is . . ."

Richard L. Evans

WE SHOULD like to begin today with a sentence with which we could well conclude—a sentence taken from the New Testament—"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"¹—and then to add to it a question and an answer from Seneca: "Thou inquirest what liberty is? [It is] to be a slave to nothing. . . ."² There are many lures to tempt men away from freedom, and all such lures are made to look desirable. "The people never give up their liberties," observed Edmund Burke, "but under some delusion."³ The fish is caught and loses his freedom and his life, not in pursuit of the hook, but in pursuit of something that cleverly conceals the hook—something tempting that is made to look good, that is made to seem safe. Any man, or almost any man, will fight against losing his freedom if he sees it being taken from him forcibly, but the greatest threat to freedom is not always the obvious force. The greatest threats are often the subtle and insidious threats—those which have the hook embedded in the bait. And in appraising all the choices of life, all the issues, all philosophies, all institutions, all men and all motives—in judging all these we should always distinguish between these two: between those who really want men to have more freedom, and those who want more regimentation of men—between those that tend toward dominating men or letting them live freer lives. Seldom it seems does any man seek to enslave another man without saying that the enslavement is somehow for the benefit and blessing of the person so enslaved—without saying that the enslavement somehow has some good within it which offsets its evil. But despite all subtlety and subterfuge, the fact remains that men were meant to be free, that they cannot grow to full stature without freedom, and that the Lord God himself is committed to giving his children their choice, even to fail, if they will. (The right to fail is in fact as important as the right to succeed.) In closing we recall Thomas Jefferson's stirring words for freedom: "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."⁴ "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."¹

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¹1 Corinthians 3:17.

²Seneca: *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium*.

³Edmund Burke, Speech at a meeting in Buckinghamshire, 1784.

⁴Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Benjamin Rush, 1800.

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Indians. Probably another quotation from the same author will throw further light on the subject. To quote:

This is all very remarkable information. But on top of it comes the fact that Mandan mythology explicitly tells that the first ancestor of this people was a white man who, in the mists of antiquity, came to the country in a canoe. Long before the first missionaries reached the Mandan they are alleged to have known of a gentle, kindly god who was born of a virgin and died a death of expiation; they told of a miracle having close affinities with the feeding of the five thousand; they related the story of the first mother of mankind and her fall, of the ark and of the dove with a green twig in its beak; they believed in a personal devil who sought to win over and subjugate to himself the world of men. . . .³⁷

The writer is of the opinion that, in its account of the Nephites who survived the last great war about 400 A.D. and joined with the Lamanites, the Book of Mormon gives the true answer regarding the origin of the basic strain of white blood in the Mandan Indians. However, the author concedes that, following the visit of Leif Ericson to Vineland about 1000 A.D., occasional groups from Europe—especially Vikings—perhaps augmented the white strain thereby helping to account for blue-eyed blonds among the Mandans.

It is evident that Mandan mythology, explained by Herrmann, has its basis in the history and traditions of the Nephites, since these people had a thorough knowledge of the history of their ancestors and the gospel doctrines contained in the Old and New Testaments. After the close of the Nephites' records in 421 A.D. and the apostasy of the people from the true gospel of Jesus Christ, it would have been natural for many of the gospel truths in an adulterated form to be carried by tradition from age to age, and so the Mandans possessed in their traditions fragments of divine truths when they first met Europeans. This could easily account for teachings to be had among the Mandans "long before the first missionaries reached" these Indians.

William Bartram, being among the earliest of the whites to visit the Indians of the southeastern part of the United States, spent considerable time among them. In a book published in 1791, he described the In-

dians he visited, pointing out that in general their hair was long and black and their complexion "... of a reddish-brown or copper color," and yet he observed some among them of lighter complexions. To quote:

The women of the Cherokees are tall, slender, erect and of a delicate frame; their features formed with perfect symmetry, their countenance cheerful and friendly, and they move with a becoming grace and dignity.

The Cherokees are yet taller and more robust than the Muscogulges, and by far the largest race of men I have seen; their complexion brighter and somewhat of the olive cast, especially the adults and some of their young women are nearly as fair and blooming as European women.³⁸

In 1879 President Wilford Woodruff spent several months among the Indians in Arizona and New Mexico. In his report he declared that some of these Indians were Nephites, or descendants of the Nephites, observing that some of them were white in color. In speaking of the Zuni Indians, President Woodruff wrote:

I went through the village and, for the first time in my life, I had a view of the white Indians. . . . I met with many who had been baptized and they were very glad to see me. They had two thousand acres of corn, looking well without irrigation. On the day following, we visited their village at their farm called Fish Springs. I was here

³⁷William Bartram, *Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, (Philadelphia, 1791)*, cited in Chapman J. Milling, *Red Carolinians* (Kingsport, Tennessee, 1940), p. 6.

OUR GARDEN

By Zelda Davis Howard

THIS is our garden which in late March was white
With snow. Trees, shrubs, vines, and
flowers were all
As tightly tucked in as if it had been night
In deep winter or the first cold day of
fall.
The sunshine and the clouds played the
game of "Who
Will win?" the betting on blue skies was
low.
It was doubtful if roots would ever come to
The end of their long sleeping and turn to
grow—
Or so it seemed to souls tired of winter.

This is that garden we thought would never
bloom

This season, but today, its broad'ning beauty
Climbs over the wall and will cover soon
Every mile of mountain, canyon, and valley.

We thank thee, dear God, for autumn's bestowing.

Why do we ever doubt, exact, and fear
When your gifts have all been re-occurring,
Blessings timed to the clock of the day and
year?

introduced to Brother Juan Bautista (John the Baptist), the first man baptized in the Zuni nation by A. M. Tenney. His son's wife was the most handsome woman I ever saw of the Indian race; had a beautiful child, nearly white.³⁹

In conclusion, it should be kept in mind that the Lord through his ancient prophets promised the Nephites that "... thy seed shall not utterly be destroyed"⁴⁰ but following the destruction of the Nephite nation, those who remained "... shall be numbered among the Lamanites."⁴¹ Obviously these promises have been fulfilled in the white Indians who reside among their darker-skinned brethren, as has been pointed out in this article. Also, the Lord promised the Nephites that even the Gentiles in the latter days would not "... destroy the mixture of thy seed, which are among thy brethren [the Lamanites or Indians]."⁴² In fact, the holy prophets declared that the descendants of the Nephites shall be preserved in the land forever, and that in the latter days "... they shall become a righteous branch unto the house of Israel."⁴³ This shall come about as a result of the Lord having established once again his Church and kingdom on the earth, and eventually—according to modern revelation—a "... knowledge of a Savior [shall come] ... to the Nephites, and the Jacobites, and the Josephites, and the Zoramites, [or, as has been pointed out—white Indians], through the testimonies of their fathers," meaning the Book of Mormon.⁴⁴ How could this revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith be fulfilled if some of the seed of the Nephites and their associates have not been preserved to our day, as white Indians?

After taking into consideration God's promises to the Nephites of a continuation of their descendants in America forever, and after making due allowance for occasional groups of white people who may have migrated to America after Moroni closed the ancient records, the writer concludes that certainly the principal progenitors of white Indians were the Nephites of Book of Mormon days.

(To be continued)

³⁹Matthias F. Cowley, Wilford Woodruff—*History of His Life and Labors as Recorded in His Daily Journals* (Salt Lake City, 1916), p. 523.

⁴⁰2 Nephi 3:3.

⁴¹Alma 45:14.

⁴²1 Nephi 13:30.

⁴³2 Nephi 9:53.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 29:12-13; D. & C. 3:16-18.