



Type: Magazine Article

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## Archaeology and the Book of Mormon

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Source: *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, Vol. 87, No. 9  
(26 February 1925)

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

Page(s): 132–134

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**Abstract:** This article claims that the conclusions of modern research of the mound builders coincides with the Book of Mormon account of the Jaredite people. Modern archaeologists conclude that the Native Americans are of one race, that their migrations were from south to north, and that the original inhabitants of America bear an unmistakable relationship to the Semitic branches of eastern culture and Egypt.

“And this is my gospel—repentance and baptism by water, and then cometh the baptism by fire and the Holy Ghost, even the Comforter, which showeth all things, and teacheth the peaceable things of the kingdom.”

Those words are true, absolutely true. I bear witness of this fact because I know it; you know it; and so we stand firmly planted on the rock of truth, bearing witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and that through Him comes redemption from death, which passes upon all men irrespective of their belief or their unbelief, their acceptance or their rejection of his mission, and also through Him comes redemption to man from sin on condition of his repentance and endurance to the end.

May we be faithful and true in the discharge of every duty and to the truth which God has revealed to us, and endure in righteousness to the end is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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## ARCHÆOLOGY AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

J. M. SJODAHL

NOT long ago an assertion was made to the effect that “recent archæological research accords wonderfully with the historical facts set forth in the Book of Mormon.” It has occurred to me that a further explanation of that statement might not be unacceptable, in view of the tremendous importance of the subject.

For instance, modern research has called attention to a widespread American civilisation that antedated that of the mound builders and the architects of ancient Mexico, Central and South America. It tells us that the mounds known as shell heaps, or kitchen middens, which dot the American coasts all the way round from Maine to California, mark the sites of ancient settlements of a race that attained some degree of civilisation “at a period undoubtedly prehistoric, but not necessarily many thousands of years old,” as John Fiske puts it. Dr. Dall, who made a special study of the shell heaps on the Aleutian Islands, reached the conclusion that the earliest deposits there are about 3,000 years old, and, as those islands were peopled from the American side (Dr. Brinton, *The American Race*, p. 20), it is a safe estimate that the earliest shell heaps on the continent date back at least 1,000 years earlier, that time being required for the necessarily slow movement northward from the original place of settlement, wherever that may have been. But by going back four thousand years we reach, almost, the date generally assigned for the building of the tower of Babel, when the Jaredites, according to the Book of Mormon, emigrated from somewhere in Asia to the western side of the world. Is this not evidence of accord between

the results obtained by archaeological research and the Book of Mormon?

The question is emphasised by all the facts known of the shell heap people. They were fishers, subsisting chiefly on oysters, cockles, mussels and aquatic animals generally. They were also hunters and trappers, living on the products of the chase. They cultivated the land, for they had stone mortars in which to crush the grain. They believed in a hereafter, as evidenced by their tender care of their dead, and they very likely engaged in devastating wars, for evidences of cannibalism have been found among the bones unearthed, and it is safe to say that cannibalism is but the twin brother of savage warfare, as history seems to prove. Dr. Foster, judging from the crania examined, concludes that the shell heap people preceded the mound builders and were a different people.

I am making no assertion that cannot be substantiated, but, if the Jaredites were the builders of the settlements of which the earliest shell heaps mark the sites, the accord between the Book of Mormon record of the Jaredites and the conclusions of modern research concerning the shell heap people is almost perfect. The shell heap people have certainly left their bones "scattered in the land northward" (Omni 22), as they were found, mixed with the bones of beast, by the expedition of King Limhi (Mosiah 8:8).

With regard to the present Indians, modern research has come to the conclusion:

(1) That they are *one* race.

Dr. Brinton includes even the Esquimaux in this classification. His observation is that the entire race is "singularly uniform in its physical traits, and individuals taken from any part of the continent could easily be mistaken for inhabitants of numerous other parts." He further argues that the culture of the native Americans strongly attests the ethnic unity of the race, and this, he says, applies equally to the ruins and relics of its vanished nations as to the institutions of existing tribes.

The psychic identity of the American Indians, Dr. Brinton further points out, is illustrated in their languages, which, notwithstanding their diversity in lexicography and surface morphology, are strikingly alike in their logical substructure, or what Humboldt calls their "inner form."

This unity is, finally, indicated by their social institutions, their arts, myths, traditions and religious rites.

Is not the unity of the Indian race the teaching of the Book of Mormon?

(2) That "the primitive lines of emigration, so far as they relate to North America, were probably from *the south to the north*; nor is there wanting historical evidences of such a movement."

I quote this from Dr. Foster, *Prehistorical Races of the United States*, p. 380.



Later movements were from the north to the south. Mexican records mention an empire from which the so-called Toltecs came, which was broken up by foreign invasion or internal disturbances. It is said that after thirteen years of conflict they finally moved southward into Mexico, where they founded the city of Tollan. (James C. Sonthall, *Recent Origin of Man*, p. 532). That the Toltecs could not have been very numerous when they arrived in Mexico is clear from the fact that some students of archaeology do not even regard them as a separate tribe, while others hold that they had formed an empire in Mexico, which was broken up by the Aztecs in the 10th century of our era.

Are not these movements, first from south to north, when the Nephites retreated before Lamanite hordes, and then from north to south, after the battles of Cunnorah, as for the first movement, expressly taught in the Book of Mormon, and, as for the second, implied in the flight of Coriantumr to Zarahemla, and the escape of Nephites "into the south countries" (Mormon 6:15)?

(3) That whatever the origin of the Indian civilisation and whatever modifications it may have had, due to either internal or external causes, it still retains unmistakable marks of its relationship with the civilisations of Asia and Egypt, and especially the Semitic branch of the eastern culture.

This is my own conclusion based on Indian myths and traditions and numerous words of Hebrew and Egyptian origin, as disclosed by modern research.

Such Indian words as Abnaki, Manta, Seyri, Lamano, Andes, Malqui, Izamal, Ehejeh, Rama, Apa, Ishu, and scores of others are clearly of Asiatic relationship, and many are pure Hebrew or Egyptian.

According to Adair some North American Indians, at a certain festival, sing these mystic words:

"Yo Meshica,  
He Meshica,  
Va Meshica."

If this is true we have here a song, or anthem, consisting of the words Yoheva Meshica, almost identical with the Hebrew, *Jehovah Mashiach*, or *The Lord Messiah*. The Hebrews never pronounced the word Jehovah, and the correct pronunciation of it was finally lost, and is lost to this day. Possibly these Indians have preserved the pronunciation of it as received from their Lamanite, or Nephite ancestors, in this song, in which the sacred word is found in three syllables between the word Messiah. Adair also claims that he heard Indians sing another song, "Shiluh yo, Shiluh he, Shiluh va," in which the word Yoheva is found between the word Shiluh, thrice repeated. But Shiluh is evidently the Hebrew, Shiloh, of the Exodus, which also refers to the Messiah, and means "messenger" or "perhaps "peace-maker," referring to the great Prince of Peace.