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Some Facts Concerning the Book of Mormon

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Abstract: This article discusses the first printing and subsequent editions of the Book of Mormon and identifies different formats the Book of Mormon has taken since its first publication.

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**SOME FACTS
 CONCERNING THE
 BOOK OF MORMON**

By Albert L. Zobell, Jr.

THE Book of Mormon was originally published at Palmyra, New York, in the print shop of Egbert B. Grandin. Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon, had mortgaged his farm to provide the publication money for this edition of five thousand copies. The five hundred and ninety page book sold for two dollars and fifty cents a copy.

At Kirtland, Ohio, in 1837, an edition of five thousand copies was printed by Oliver Cowdery, also one of the three witnesses, and scribe of the Prophet Joseph Smith during the translation of the Book of Mormon. This edition contained six hundred twenty-one pages.

Editions were printed at Nauvoo, Illinois, during 1840 and 1842. These five hundred seventy-three page editions had been stereotyped in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Meanwhile the first European edition had been printed at Liverpool, England, in 1841. Five thousand copies had been contracted for, but only four thousand fifty were delivered. The cost of this printing was about one thousand eighty dollars.

In the Liverpool edition of 1852 Elder Franklin D. Richards numbered the verses of the various chapters. In 1879, at Liverpool, Elder Orson Pratt divided the book into chapters and verses and used footnote references for the first time.

The Book of Mormon was first issued in double-column pages, with chapter headings, chronological data, revised footnote references, pronouncing vocabulary, and index in 1920. It now contains five hundred twenty-two pages.

This book of ancient American scripture, revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith by the hand of God a little more than a century ago, is made up of 306,118 words, 6,604 verses, two hundred thirty-nine chapters, and fifteen books. The longest book is Alma; the longest chapter is Jacob 5; the shortest book is Jarom; the shortest chapter is Moroni 5; the middle book is Mosiah; the middle chapter is Alma 25; and the middle verse is Alma 27:23. The average chapter is twenty-seven and two-thirds verses long.

Twenty-three men dedicated themselves to the recording of the activities of their people upon ancient plates. Amos II held the plates for the longest number of years, one hundred eleven, while Shiblon was their custodian for just three years. This sacred trust of historian was usually passed from father to son, among God-fearing men.