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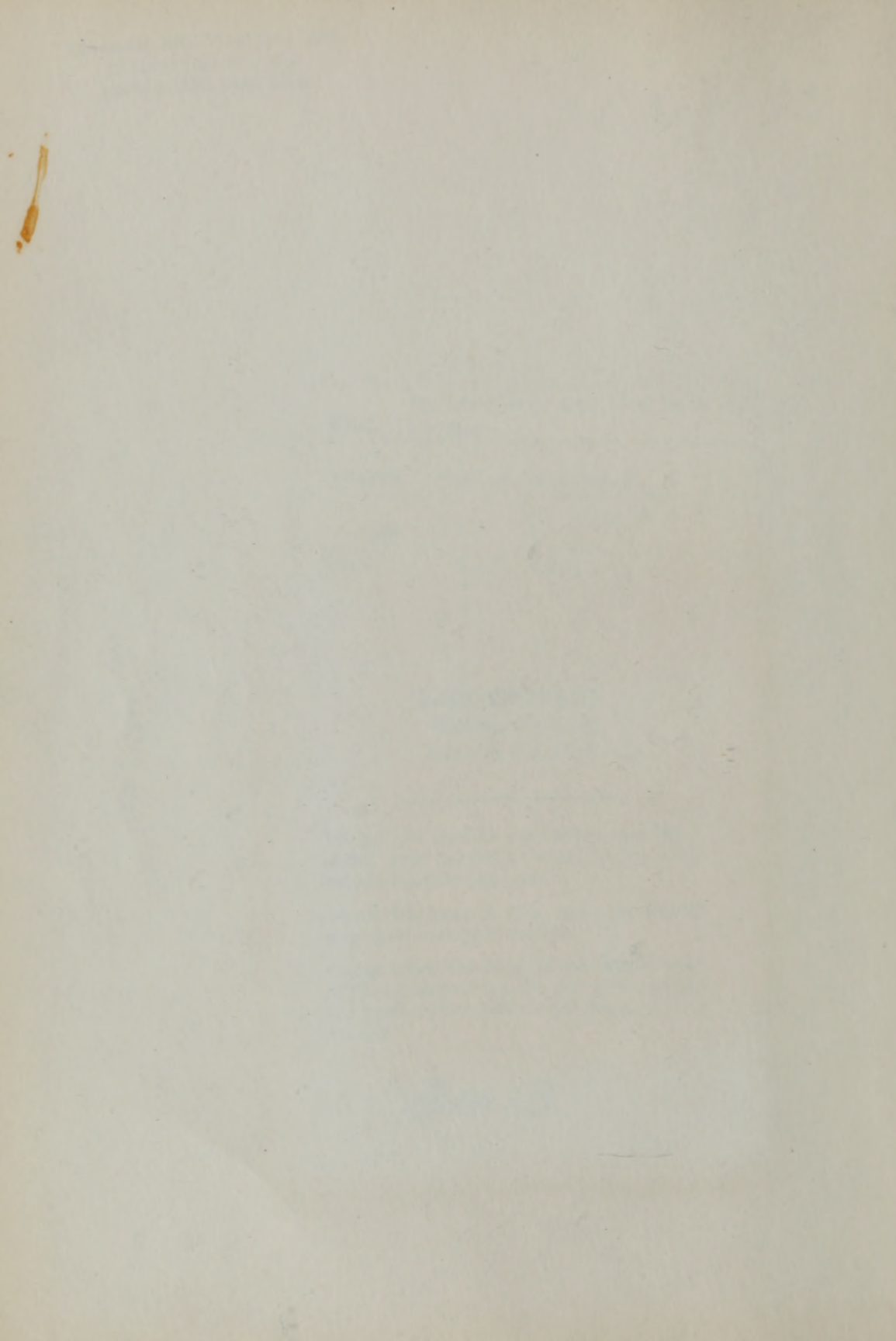
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ARCHAEOLOGY
and the
BOOK OF MORMON

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ARCHAEOLOGY and the BOOK OF MORMON

By
MILTON R. HUNTER, PH. D.
of the
FIRST COUNCIL OF THE SEVENTY
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

VOLUME I

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FOREWORD

Archaeology and the Book of Mormon by Dr. Milton R. Hunter unfolds with all the excitement of a well-plotted detective story. Added to its fascination is the knowledge that the author authenticates everything which he includes in the book.

When the Book of Mormon was published, a storm of protest arose throughout the United States. What was this about horses in the Americas? Whoever thought of white Indians? After all, Indians were Indians. With the persistence of the scholar that he is, Dr. Hunter pursued the persistent reports that there were still white Indians in some parts of the Americas. In this book he has verified the fact that there are many white Indians in the Western Hemisphere even to this day. He has also proved that ancestors of these Indians recognized that in their time in the distant past there were white and red Indians—a fact that gained credence with the discovery of the frescoes and murals still extant in archaeological ruins of early cities.

The difficulties the author and his party of two encountered would be enough to discourage all but the most intrepid of men. That they refused to be deterred is further evidence of their courage and determination and stature as historians. Through jungles and deserts, among friendly and unfriendly natives, Dr. Hunter followed the search for unquestionable proof of the existence of the two distinct peoples living in ancient America as well as of the use of the horse in the Western Hemisphere prior to the advent of Columbus.

Success was his almost beyond his fondest aspirations. Accompanied by the only Latter-day Saint guide in Mexico, José Dávila, and by the skilled photographer, Otto Done, Dr. Hunter survived almost incredible adventures in the successful search for corroborative evidence of the Book of Mormon.

Lest the reader think that the definitive nature of the work may make the book heavy reading—let him be assured that the approach—that of the tourist-traveler and at the same time historian—makes everything assume the freshness of the adventurer's first view of the many cities and the innumerable archaeological finds.

Eminently qualified for this assignment, Dr. Hunter has the training, the intuition, and the interest essential to assure success.

Dr. Herbert E. Bolton, director of the Bancroft Library and chairman of the history department of the University of California, said, "Hunter, I won't let you throw your career away on some little Mormon seminary in Utah. You have the makings of one of America's great historians. I haven't spent these past years in order for you to expend this training fruitlessly. If you will change your mind, we will secure for you a proper place in a great university where expectations, and the training you have received, may be realized."¹

Since Dr. Hunter has always placed the Church above personal recognition, he returned to Utah as a member of the faculty of the LDS Institute at Logan, Utah. Contrary to what Dr. Bolton feared, Dr. Hunter has continued his alert interest in history, and has published sixteen books as well as innumerable articles in the leading historical journals.

He has been so well recognized for his work that he was sought not only once but twice to write articles for encyclopedias—articles which won the plaudits of the editors. In addition Dr. Hunter has been called upon to write the yearbook articles for an encyclopedia for the past four years.

With all of this activity, Dr. Hunter has promulgated Church doctrine since his return to Utah. His call to the First Council of the Seventy has enhanced his feeling of responsibility to use his talents for the furtherance of the work of the Church. Those who have worked closely with Dr. Hunter cannot help feeling that the way has been opened for his obtaining the needed materials for this stimulation and authoritative volume.

Archaeology and the Book of Mormon deserves wide acceptance both for its fascinating information and for its definitive approach.

December 15, 1956
Salt Lake City, Utah

MARBA C. JOSEPHSON
Associate Managing Editor
The Improvement Era

¹G. Homer Durham, "Milton R. Hunter," *Improvement Era* (Salt Lake City, May, 1945), p. 241.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Book of Mormon has stood and will continue to stand on its own merits; however, certain people demand scientific evidences. To satisfy their demands, an attempt has been made in this book to correlate certain recent archaeological and anthropological findings with related Book of Mormon claims and present the newly discovered evidences herein.

This book expresses my personal views and findings. While I assume all and full responsibility for it and all of its parts, I am indebted to many people for their helpful suggestions and assistance rendered in its production. I take this opportunity to acknowledge my deep obligation and sincere appreciation to them.

I express sincere gratitude to the First Presidency of the Church and to President Joseph Fielding Smith for affording me the opportunity to visit Mexico and Central America on mission tours and on other occasions, thereby making it possible for me to visit and study numerous archaeological sites and collections of relics in museums.

Deep appreciation is extended to Elder N. G. Morgan, Sr., to Elder Edwin Whitney, to Dr. J. LeRoy Kimball—all of Salt Lake City—and to Elder Merland Clark of Idaho Falls, who rendered valuable assistance and encouragement in helping to make possible the collecting of numerous archaeological photographs, many of which are reproduced in this volume.

Special recognition and appreciation are extended to José Dávila, who was hired to serve as guide on three of the archaeological trips I took to Mexico and Central America, and also to Otto Done, who was hired to accompany us on one of the tours and serve in the capacity of photographer. They were both agreeable traveling companions and did commendable work.

Elder Toby Pingree arranged for transportation for us in Guatemala and rendered various other services to make possible the completion of our work. His mission president, Gordon M. Romney, and Sister Romney were generous with their time and hospitable to us. For all these kindnesses the writer is grateful.

Deep appreciation is expressed to President and Sister Claudious Bowman of the Mexican Mission for their hospitality and kindness and for taking me to some of the archaeological sites. Also, President and Sister Edgar L. Wagner of the Central American Mission were very co-operative on my last trip to Central America.

I express sincere thanks to Robert Bruce of Sapulpa, Oklahoma, for providing me with a number of photographs of the Lacandón Indians, taken by himself and Barbara Sykes, and graciously permitting me to publish them in this volume. I also extend gratitude to Mrs. Ballard Hadman of Ketchikan, Alaska, for providing me with photographs of white, fullblood Haida Indians.

During the past two or three years, a multitude of people, in letters and in private conversations, have encouraged me to continue my research in the field of archaeology and the study of the Book of Mormon. Dozens of them

have sent me clippings from newspapers and magazines, telling of archaeological findings. Some of them have informed me where valuable information could be secured which was pertinent to the general theme. Others have sent me important archaeological photographs. I am sorry that space will not permit special mention of each of them; but I am grateful to them all. Acknowledgment is made, however, to Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Quorum of the Twelve and Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of the Seventy, who have extended numerous courtesies and encouragement while I have been working on this material. Appreciation is expressed to Dr. Ariel L. Crowley of Idaho City and to Elder Thomas Stuart Ferguson of Orinda, California, outstanding students in this field, and to Carl Erickson of Monte Vista, Colorado. Also gratitude is expressed to Elder J. Fred Evans of Council Bluffs, Iowa, for providing me with several important books on archaeology and an abundance of information which he had collected.

I extend deep appreciation to Elder Harold B. Lee and Elder Richard L. Evans, both of the Council of the Twelve, for reading the part of the manuscript which was published in *The Improvement Era* and offering numerous helpful suggestions. Also, I am grateful for the co-operation and suggestions given by members of *The Improvement Era* staff, especially Elder Doyle L. Green, Sister Marba C. Josephson, and Sister Elizabeth J. Moffitt. Sister Josephson read the entire manuscript and offered many valuable suggestions. She also read the proofs and wrote the foreword. I appreciate all that she did.

I acknowledge my deep obligation for the helpful suggestions of Elder Alva H. Parry, manager of the Deseret Book Company, and Elder Thomas S. Monson and Elder S. Ross Fox of the Deseret News Press, for giving unstintedly of their time and counsel in arranging for printing of the book and publishing it. Also those who worked on the production of this volume at the Deseret News Press co-operated wholeheartedly. I appreciate the work done by Miss Bonnie Joe Kesler, my secretary, who typed all the material and willingly gave her services in any way possible.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to my wife, Ferne G. Hunter, and express deep appreciation to her. The fullest credit for the completion of this book rightfully goes to her. Also, she assisted me in numerous ways throughout the entire preparation of the manuscript, offered numerous helpful suggestions, and she and Sister Marba C. Josephson did all the proofreading in preparing the material for publication. Without her help the book would not have been completed and published.

MILTON R. HUNTER

December 15, 1956
Salt Lake City, Utah

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EXPLANATION REGARDING FOOTNOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ibid.</i>	From the Latin <i>ibidem</i> , meaning “the same reference as last cited.”
<i>op. cit.</i>	From the Latin <i>opere citato</i> , meaning “the work cited more than one note previously.”
e.g.	From the German <i>folgende</i> , meaning “and the example.”
ff.	From the Latin <i>exempli gratia</i> , meaning “for pages following.”
f.	Meaning “and the page following.”
pp.	Meaning “pages.”
p.	Meaning “page.”
2a.	Meaning the first portion of verse two.
5b.	Meaning the latter portion of verse five.
3:10, 4:6, 10, 16-20.	Meaning “chapter three, verse ten; chapter four, verses six, ten, sixteen to twenty.”

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GULF OF MEXICO

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MAP OF MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA

- CITIES AND MUSEUMS DISCUSSED IN BOOK ★
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- STATE BOUNDARIES - - - - -
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COZUMEL

YUCATAN
 CHICHEN ITZA
 UXNAL
 KABAH

CAMPECHE

QUINTANA ROO

BRITISH HONDURAS

GUATEMALA

EL SALVADOR

HONDURAS

NICARAGUA

M.R.H.

LA VENTIA

TRES ZAPOTES

LA VENTIA

VILLAHERMOSA

PALENQUE

USUMACINTA

TENOSIQUE

UAXACTUN

TIKAL

LAKE PETEN

PIEDRAS NEGRAS

LAGUNA

YAXACHILAN

FLORES

LACANJA RIVER

BONAMPAR

GUATEMALA CITY

ANTIGUA

PATZUN

EL TAJIN

IZAPA

TAPACHULA

HUEHUETENANGO

ZACULEU

TONICAPAN

QUIZAL

LAKE ATITLAN

KAMINALJUYU

CHICHICASTENANGO

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GUATEMALA CITY

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CHAPTER 1

THE CHICHEN ITZA HORSE

VISITING CHICHEN ITZA, YUCATAN, 1954

The sun was only three or four hours above the horizon on the morning of January 27, 1954, when President and Sister Claudious Bowman of the Mexican Mission, José Dávila (Hō-zay' Dav'ee-la), our Mexican guide, Sister Hunter and I, arrived at Chichén Itzá (Chee-chen' Eet-zá'), Yucatán. As we approached this famous archaeological site, the first impressive structure to meet our gaze was the massive and beautiful pyramid sometimes referred to as the "Temple of Kukulcan" (Koo-kul-con') and at other times called *El Castillo*—The Castle.

Eagerly we climbed the steep stairs or steps which lead to the top of the pyramid eighty-two feet above the ground. Situated on the summit of this massive structure is an impressive temple twelve feet high. On its walls and door jambs we observed and photographed the bearded men bedecked with headdresses of long-flowing quetzal feathers, as well as the serpents which decorate the door jambs and other portions of the temple. These elaborate symbols of Quetzalcoatl were very impressive to us.

The Chichén Itzá archaeological structures are divided into three different sections. One group of buildings is called the North Zone. The second group is designated as the Middle Zone; and the third, with its superb architecture of the Old Maya Empire or Classic Period, is named Old Chichén Itzá. It is located in the jungles a few miles south of the other two groups of archaeological structures.

Throughout the entire day we visited one important archaeological structure after another at Chichén Itzá. Among the most interesting remains in the North Zone of this famous archaeological site, in addition to the Temple of Kukulcan, are the unusual "Ball Court" with its superb acoustic qualities, the "Temple of the Tigers," the "Temple of the Eagles," the "Tomb of the Chacmool," the "Temple of the Warriors," and adjacent to it, the "Thousand Columns." In addition to these perhaps the Sacred Well or *Cenote*



—Photographs by Otto Done

Fig. 1: TEMPLE OF KUKULCAN, CHICHEN ITZA

macmool in foreground on Temple of the Warriors. In background *El Castillo* or Temple of Kukulcan at Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, Mexico.

Fig. 2: NUNNERY AND CHURCH, CHICHEN ITZA

in opposite page east end of the Nunnery and back view of the Church. A Maya man and two Maya women wearing typical native costumes. *Caracol* or Observatory in background at Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, Mexico.

(Sâ-nō'-tay), where the ancient inhabitants of Chichén Itzá sacrificed their most beautiful maidens to the rain god Chac, arouses more curiosity in the minds of tourists than does anything else at Chichén Itzá.

VISITING THE MIDDLE ZONE

We had visited all the places of interest in the North Zone by 3:00 p.m. During the remainder of the afternoon we visited the archaeological structures of the Middle Zone. We climbed to the



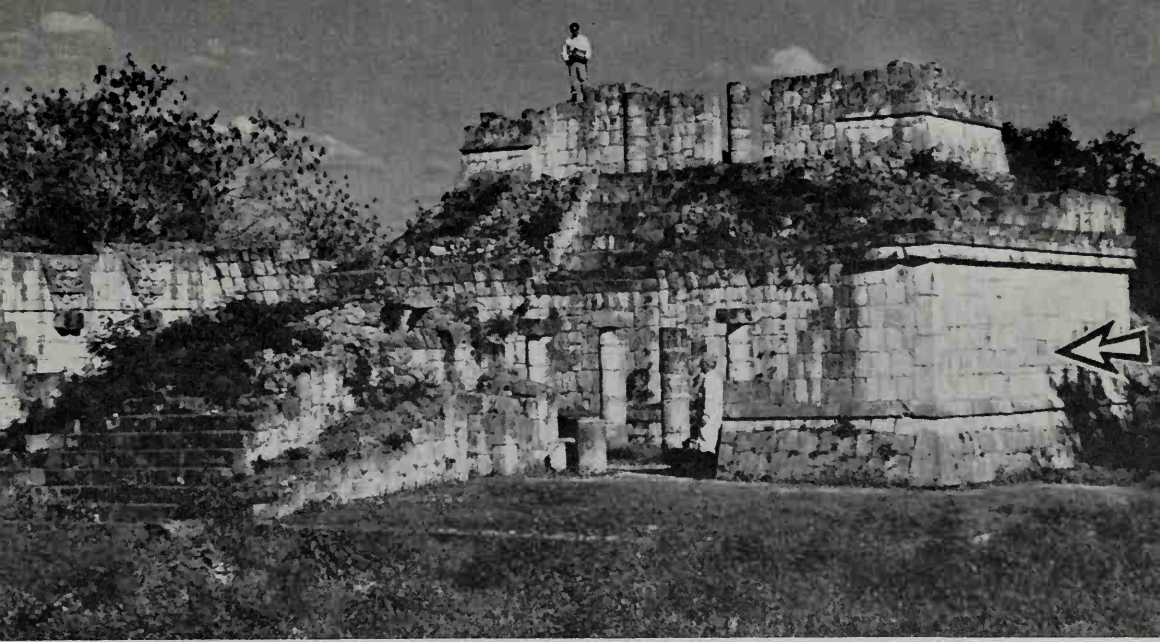
top of the pyramid called "The Tomb of the High Priest," and looked down into the deep shaft which goes from the top straight down into the center of the pyramid. We recalled that Edward Herbert Thompson, an American who purchased the archaeological site of Chichén Itzá and dredged the Sacred Well to verify the tradition of its having been used by the ancient Mayas for human sacrificial purposes, had crawled down into that hole and soon found that he had entered the home of a boa constrictor approximately fifteen feet in length.

We next visited the "House of the Three Brothers," the home in which Indian tradition claims three brothers (white men) had lived for many years and taught the people much of their culture. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ are prone to think that these men may be identified with "the three Nephites" told about in the Book of Mormon.

We next came to the *Caracol* or "Observatory." Here the Maya priest-astronomers during the past ages studied the heavenly bodies and attained a knowledge of them which has astounded modern scholars. The ancient Maya Observatory stands along the east side of a quadrangle, which is surrounded on three sides by archaeological structures.

The "Nunnery," an archaeological building of gigantic proportions, runs east and west along the south side of the quadrangle. This is the largest of all the archaeological ruins at Chichén Itzá. It contains several rooms. Those who named it the Nunnery thought that Indian women, who could have filled a position in the religion of the Itzá Mayas comparable to nuns in the Catholic Church, may have lived in it. Others have maintained that perhaps the girls who were selected to be offered as sacrifices in the Sacred Well may have lived in the Nunnery for several months' time in preparation for the holy sacrifices.

Near the corner of the Nunnery stands the Church or Cathedral. It is a very beautiful, ornate building. The photograph shows two Maya girls sitting to the east end of the Nunnery and behind the Church. Perhaps a hundred yards from the Nunnery, surrounded by jungle vegetation, we visited a building called *Akabdzib* or "Dark Writing." An important archaeological structure,



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 3: TEMPLE OF PLAQUES, CHICHEN ITZA
Arrow indicates the location of carving of horse.

called “The Temple of the Wall Panels or Plaques,” stands adjacent to the southeast corner of the Observatory. It is one of the buildings situated along the east side of the quadrangle.

CARVING DEPICTING A HORSE

As the sun neared the western horizon, we came around the corner of the Temple of the Plaques. José Dávila explained: “As you will observe, a section on each end of this building, called the wall panel or plaque, is covered with carvings of animals and birds which were familiar to the people who inhabited this ancient city.” Then, pointing to the carvings on one of the stones, he continued: “This particular carving is a clear representation of a horse; and to the side of the horse stands a bearded man.”

Since I was well acquainted with the claim made by archaeologists, historians, and others at the time of the publishing of the Book of Mormon in 1830 that there had never been horses in ancient America and since I knew that that viewpoint had been altered by archaeological discoveries during the past hundred years to the idea that horses had never existed on the Western Hemisphere during the age of white man, I immediately became unusually interested and highly excited.

HORSES AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

From the days of the publishing of the Book of Mormon, its claim of domesticated horses in ancient America has been a point of contention between those who accepted that record as being true and accurate and those who disbelieved it; and now directly in front of us on the wall of that ancient building at Chichén Itzá,



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 4: CHICHEN ITZA HORSE

Milton R. Hunter pointing at likeness of the Chichén Itzá horse and bearded man.

Yucatán, plainly visible to tourists and archaeologists, a representation of a horse was clearly depicted. There immediately before our eyes was new and valuable Book of Mormon evidence.

“By the gift and power of God,”¹ the Prophet Joseph Smith translated from the Jaredite account a statement which claims that those ancient Americans during the days of King Emer “. . . had horses . . . which were useful unto man, . . .”² Several statements

¹D. & C. 135:3.

²Ether 9:16-19. Italics supplied by the writer throughout the chapter.

scattered throughout the Book of Mormon make it clear that the Nephites and Lamanites also possessed horses throughout the entire course of their history, at least to the time of the destruction of the Nephite nation.³ For example, we read: "And it came to pass that *the Nephites did till the land, and raise . . . many horses.*"⁴ In regards to the Lamanites using horses and chariots, the ancient record claims that Ammon fed King Lamoni's horses and then prepared them and his chariots that the Lamanite ruler might attend a feast given in the city of Nephi by his father, the head king over all the Lamanites.⁵ We read also in the Book of Mormon that a little over a hundred years after the mention was made of horses and chariots owned by Lamoni, a Lamanite king, the Nephite historian stated that Lachoneus, the Nephite ruler, had all of his people bring their horses and chariots to one central gathering place in preparation for war.⁶

Thus, this record of the inhabitants of ancient America contains the foregoing facts in direct opposition to the claims that frequently have been made by some historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, and other scientists that there were no horses in ancient America at the time of its discovery, nor had there been during man's sojourn here.

Our guide explained: "Some of the most outstanding Maya scholars and archaeologists, such as Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson⁷ and Dr. Sylvanus G. Morley,⁸ date the erection of most of these buildings at Chichén Itzá at approximately 1,000 A.D. If their dating is correct, in all probability this representation of the horse was carved about five hundred years before Columbus discovered America. It stands to reason that if these ancient Maya people had had no horses to observe they could not have carved a likeness of one on this building."

We all agreed that the fact that a likeness of a horse was carved on the wall of one of the ancient buildings at Chichén Itzá many years before the Spaniards came to this land with their horses supplies new and important evidence to sustain further the

³Nephi 4:4; 6:1; 21:14.

⁴Enos 1:21.

⁵Alma 18:9-10, 12.

⁶3 Nephi 3:22.

⁷J. Eric S. Thompson, *The Civilization of the Mayas* (Chicago, Ill., 1953), p. 20.

⁸Sylvanus G. Morley, *The Ancient Maya* (Palo Alto, Calif., 1947), p. 81.

truthfulness of the claims made in the Book of Mormon relative to horses; and so this representation constitutes what might be considered by truth seekers a noteworthy evidence sustaining the claims made by the ancient Nephite historians.

It was José Dávila, five and one-half years a branch president of the Puebla (Pueb'-la) Branch, Mexico, and the only registered Latter-day Saint guide in that country—therefore the one best qualified to show our people around Mexico—who informed me as to the location of the likeness of this carved horse, and since it was he who directed me to it, I wish to acknowledge this fact.

A more complete discussion on horses in ancient America will be presented in a later volume.

PLANS FOR A TOUR

Unfortunately, my photograph of the horse was taken shortly before sundown, and upon my arrival at Salt Lake City I found that it was a very poor one. I suppose that my being overexcited at seeing what could be new Book of Mormon evidence caused me to be a little overanxious and turn too much light on my camera. During the following several months' time I tried in vain to get others visiting Yucatán to take the photograph for me. Finally in the fall of 1954, at the suggestion of a friend who is the resident manager of a travel agency, I was invited to direct a tour to Mexico during my Christmas vacation and take the picture of the horse myself. He volunteered to outline the tour. This opened a wonderful possibility. Thereupon the details of the arrangements were completed, and I invited twenty people who I thought would be interested to accompany me in touring Book of Mormon lands.

The trip would take us to Guatemala, Yucatán in Mexico, and throughout various other states of that country. The story of our tour will be told in the following chapter.

A three weeks' tour was planned. After making the itinerary, we found that there were a few places in which I have been intensely interested for years to which the regular airlines did not go; for example, Bonampak (Bo'nám-pak), discovered in 1946 in the extreme southern jungles of Mexico, where likenesses of dark and light peoples were painted on the walls of one of the buildings, had been of extreme interest to me. I wanted to see these paintings

which could be interpreted as an indication of Nephites and Lamanites having once lived in ancient America. Also, I was very anxious to visit Palenque (Pä-len'-kay) where the cross of Palenque and other crosses have been found, which connote that the inhabitants of that ancient city had been worshipers of the "White Bearded God," who tradition claims had visited their ancestors. Latter-day Saints identify him as Jesus Christ. The belief in this God is often indicated by a cross to be found among the archaeological ruins. Since Dr. Alberto Ruz (Rooz) discovered the Egyptian-type burial at Palenque on June 15, 1953, my urge had been intensified to go there and study firsthand those great discoveries.

In the jungles of northern Guatemala (Gwä-ta-mä'la) such places as Flores (Flor'-ays), the home of the Itzá Mayas following the conquest of Chichén Itzá by the Spaniards, Uaxactún and Tikal, two of the earliest Maya archaeological sites known on the Western Hemisphere, and other early archaeological sites such as Copán and Quiriguá were all considered by me as places of prime importance which I must visit to further my research in the important field of archaeology and the Book of Mormon.

Thereupon plans were made for me to remain in Mexico and Central America after the members of the touring party returned to Salt Lake City, to take José Dávila with me, and to visit these and others of the archaeological sites. Our purposes were to take pictures of various archaeological remains and bring them back for Church use, and for me to become better informed regarding the archaeological ruins, and also to gather material to write on the subject of "Archaeology and the Book of Mormon."

Following the return of the touring party members at the close of the three weeks' tour, the decision was made to take Otto Done, an expert photographer, with José Dávila and myself to all of the principal archaeological sites in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and Yucatán for the purpose of taking moving pictures for the Church. These tours will be discussed in chapters five and six.

RETURNING HOME

When first making preparations for the tour, I told Sister Hunter that I was going to be gone from home for three weeks' time. After finding that we couldn't visit all the archaeological sites on the main

tour, I told her that we would be gone four weeks. After arriving in Mexico and working out a more accurate and complete itinerary on the length of time it would take to go into the jungles, I wrote home and suggested that I would be gone five weeks. As our archaeological work progressed, it became apparent that it would consume even more time, and so I informed my wife that it would take six weeks. Thereupon she wrote to me and said, "Milton, there are some ruins in our back yard which I think you should come home to see"; and so after six weeks and two days' time, on February 5, 1955, I arrived home to see them—an unusual but effective way to bring a husband home.

CHAPTER 2

JOSEPH SMITH AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

JOSEPH SMITH AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

On March 26, 1830, a book entitled the Book of Mormon was published at Palmyra, a small, frontier town in western New York.¹ Speaking in a general sense, it would seem that there would have been nothing unusual about the publishing of a book, since an untold number of them came from the press in America each year; but this particular book and all the circumstances connected with it were unique. As far as the writer knows, no other book in the history of the world had had so many events connected with it which could be considered as being in the realm of the supernatural as had the records from which the Book of Mormon was translated. From the time the first prophet-historian in ancient times began the recording of the history of his people on the metal plates until Joseph Smith published his translation of the contents of the ancient records, event after event occurred within the realm of what people regard as being miraculous. Back in ancient times on the Western Hemisphere, acting in accordance with direct revelations from the Lord, holy prophets had recorded on metal plates ("gold plates") the history of their people, including the revelations received from the Lord and the teachings of the religious leaders. The records were completed in 421 A.D. Under divine protection they were preserved to be brought forth in the latter days as a new witness to Jesus Christ and thereby to stand as a testimony supporting the teachings of the Holy Bible. The last prophet-historian was made the custodian of the ancient, sacred records.

During the night of September 21-22, 1823, an angel stood beside Joseph Smith's bed and told the young man that his name was Moroni. He announced that he was the last writer of the re-

¹Note: Dr. Frederick J. Turner, the originator of the frontier thesis in American history, defined the American frontier as the geographical area bordering on the land of the red men. In the westward migration of the American colonists, "the frontier was the edge of the wave—the meeting point between savagery and civilization." Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, pp. 3-4.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 5: TEMPLE-CROWNED PYRAMID AT TIKAL

Temple on top of tall pyramid at Tikal, Petén, Guatemala. Tikal is located in the jungles in northeastern Guatemala. It was perhaps at one time ancient America's largest city with an estimated population of two million people. Its inhabitants erected steep tall pyramids on which they placed temples for religious purposes.

ligious history of an ancient race of people called Nephites. He said that the history had been recorded on metal plates and that they were hidden in a hill not far from the Smith farm. During the past fourteen hundred years, Moroni had been in charge of those sacred records, and now he had been sent from the presence of God to tell Joseph Smith about them. He informed the Prophet that in due time he would be given the ancient records and endowed with power from on high to translate their contents into English. Then the people throughout the world could learn about God's dealings with the great civilizations which lived upon the American continents in ancient times. The heavenly messenger conversed with Joseph Smith throughout the entire night and again at the sacred depository the following day.

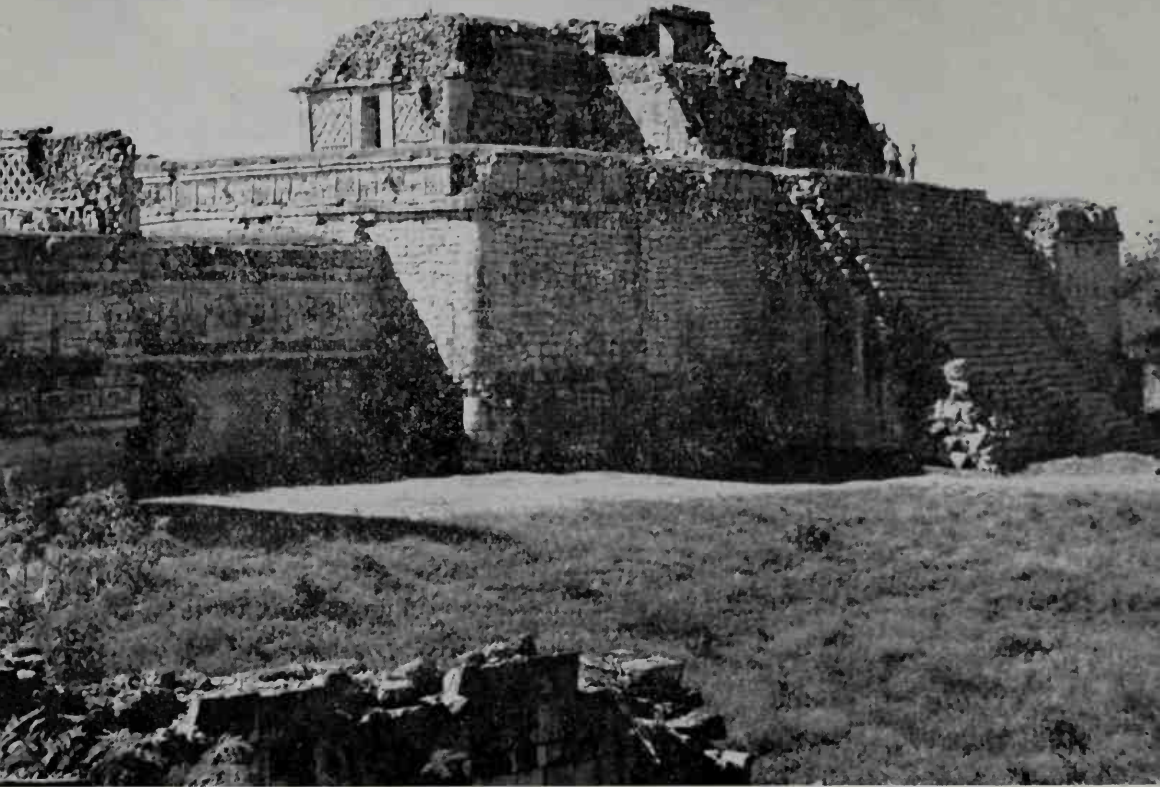
After Joseph had met the Angel Moroni each year for four years at the place where the records were deposited, on September 22, 1827, the angel gave the Prophet the records and instructions relative to them. Joseph Smith was also given some curious instruments known as the Urim and Thummim, instruments which had been used by prophets in ancient times. Through the use of the Urim and Thummim, the application of a sufficient amount of faith, prayers, righteousness, and hard study, and "by the gift and power of God," Joseph Smith translated the ancient American records and published his translation under the title of the Book of Mormon.

BRIEF NARRATIVE OF BOOK OF MORMON HISTORY

The Book of Mormon tells the story of a group of people who—under commandments from the Lord and the leadership of a great prophet—were brought to the Western Hemisphere from the Tower of Babel. They were called Jaredites. This people established a very superior civilization which flourished for nearly twenty-five hundred years. During certain periods of their history, the Jaredites reached heights in civilization and culture which few peoples in the world have attained.² Finally the Jaredites were exterminated in a terrible war. Their history is told in the book of Ether, which appears toward the latter part of the Book of Mormon.

About B.C. 600 another group of people called Nephites, and shortly thereafter a third group, called Mulekites, were brought from

²Ether 10:18-29.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 6: NUNNERY AT CHICHEN ITZA

Jerusalem to America by holy prophets who were directed by the Lord. About B.C. 200 they merged together and lived thereafter as one people. For approximately one thousand years—B.C. 600 to A.D. 400—these people flourished in the New World, attaining great heights in civilization. The major part of the Book of Mormon tells their story.

The Nephites and Mulekites were white and beautiful peoples of Israelitic origin. However, because of the wickedness of a portion of the first group of colonists, the Lord placed the curse of a dark skin on a part of them, which curse was retained by their descendants. Those who had dark skins and all the white people who joined with them were called Lamanites.

About A.D. 400 the Lamanites exterminated the Nephite nation in a horrible war. Many of the Lamanites, and also the Nephites

who deserted their people and joined the darker-skinned race, escaped destruction and continued to inhabit the Western Hemisphere. Following the close of Nephite recorded history, Mongolians, Vikings, and perhaps small groups of wanderers from other lands, came to the Americas and intermarried—to a greater or less extent—with the descendants of Book of Mormon peoples. Their posterity constituted the numerous aboriginal tribes found in the New World by the Europeans.

When Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492, he thought he had discovered the East Indies, and so the bronze-colored people found here were named Indians. This name has been applied to all the aborigines of America regardless of how dark or light-colored their skins may have been, even to the white descendants of the Nephites.

REACTIONS TOWARD THE BOOK OF MORMON

From the time Joseph Smith announced his First Vision—the visitation of the Eternal Father and his Only Begotten Son in the Sacred Grove when Joseph was only fourteen years of age—to the present time, there has been no neutral ground when Joseph Smith was being considered. His claims are so unusual, so vital, and so far-reaching that people either accept them in their entirety without reservations or flatly reject them.

When I was attending the University of California in 1933, the foregoing fact was drawn very vividly to my attention. I was taking a class under the direction of Dr. Frederic L. Paxson, one of America's outstanding historians. The subject for discussion that particular day was "Mormon Colonization of the Great West." Professor Paxson introduced the discussion with the following remarks: "Whether they belong to the Mormon Church or not, historians are in agreement when Brigham Young's outstanding achievements as one of the world's greatest colonizers are being considered. But the same fact doesn't hold true in regard to Joseph Smith. Many people believe implicitly all the claims he made, including the appearance of numerous heavenly personages to him and the miraculous way in which he received the gold plates from which he translated the Book of Mormon. It is no reflection on people's intelligence to believe those things; in fact, some of the most intelligent people that I have ever met were devout members of the Latter-day Saint

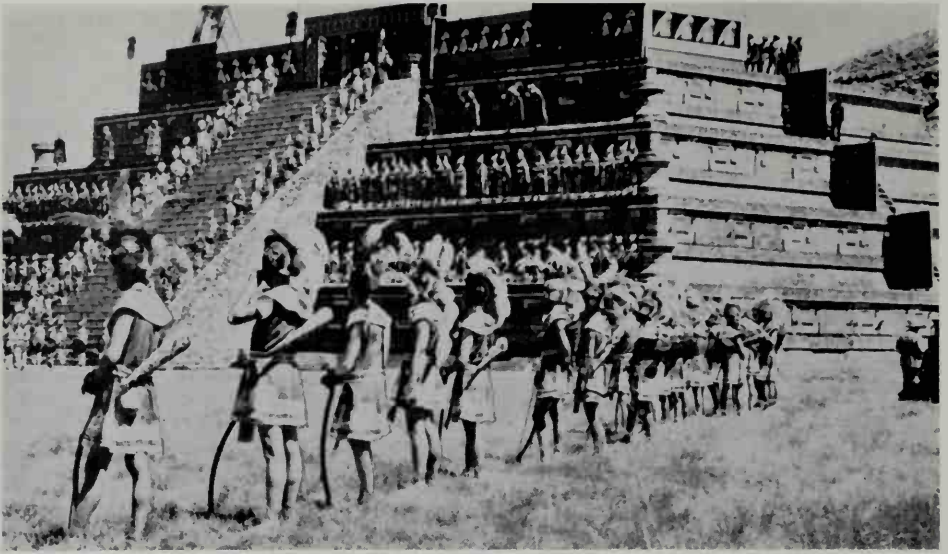


Fig. 7: TOLTEC TEMPLE

Toltec temple at Teotihuacán, twenty-six miles north of Mexico City. The Mexicans are presenting a pageant based on Toltec traditions.

Church and had strong convictions regarding Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. On the other hand, there are many intelligent people who do not believe the claims made by Joseph Smith. I hope to be counted an intelligent person, and I do not believe those things. There is no middle ground upon which to stand when the claims of Joseph are being considered.”

When the Book of Mormon first came from the press, many devout, intellectual, and faithful people—upon reading the book and learning of its origin—attained a positive conviction of its truthfulness. And since that time hundreds of thousands of people have received what Latter-day Saints term “a testimony of the gospel.” They have possessed a firm conviction that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God and that he had received numerous heavenly manifestations and revelations from the Lord, just as did Moses, Abraham, and others of the ancient Hebrew prophets. They have accepted fully Joseph Smith’s account of the origin of the Book of Mormon, and they have believed that it contained the word of God equal in authority and divinity to the teachings of Christ found in the New Testament. When they have received that strong testimony through the power of the Holy Ghost, they have become members of the Church of Jesus Christ, believing with all their hearts that they

were recipients of the true gospel of the Master which had been restored to earth through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith. They have accepted the assignments received through revelations to preach the restored gospel to the world, to do temple work for their departed ancestors, and to build Zion, or the kingdom of God, in preparation for the millennial reign of the Savior.

When the Book of Mormon was first published, certain other people not only disbelieved Joseph Smith's story regarding its origin, but some of them also ridiculed him and even violently persecuted him. Finally they murdered him. Book after book has come from the press since 1830 in which the authors have endeavored to prove that Joseph Smith was a liar, a fraud, and a false prophet, and that the Book of Mormon was not what it and the Prophet claimed it to be. The arguments presented by those writers in general defeated the arguments presented by one another. The result has been that all of their works have come to naught. The evil results of their efforts have vanished as the dews on earth's verdure vanish in the presence of the rising sun. Thus, the Book of Mormon stands today in higher repute than ever before in the history of the Church. None of its claims have been proved to be false.

A third group of people have been completely indifferent to Joseph Smith's claims and the Book of Mormon itself. That group must be classed with those people who have openly rejected the Prophet's declarations. Many among them are outstanding anthropologists, archaeologists, and historians, men who have a natural interest in the story of ancient America and the origin of the American Indians. The Book of Mormon contains the most complete and accurate account of those subjects of any book in the world; and yet many of the very people who one would think would be eager to read the Book of Mormon and evaluate its contents completely ignore it.

It is a fact that a vast majority of the people in the world who have had opportunities to study the Book of Mormon have turned their backs on that book without even giving it a hearing because of its miraculous origin, and yet they claimed to be Christians who readily accepted the ministration of angels in ancient times to the Hebrew prophets. The world is more densely populated with God's children today than at any other time in history, and yet these people

who reject the Book of Mormon without even looking at it have done so because they have thought that it was unreasonable to believe that the same God who sent angels to visit the ancient prophets would be interested enough in his numerous children who constitute the human family today to send angels to prophets for their good. The very thought of a nineteenth century American prophet—one who proclaimed that he had received numerous heavenly manifestations, even a vision of the Eternal Father and his Only Begotten Son, one who claimed that he had been given ancient records by an angel, and furthermore one who openly declared that he had received many revelations from heaven which he published as new scriptures³—was incompatible with their thinking. They maintained that such things happened in ancient Israel, but they could not happen in modern times.

In an address delivered before the senior class of the Divinity School of Harvard University on July 15, 1838, Ralph Waldo Emerson, one of America's most intellectual citizens, and one of the greatest thinkers of Joseph Smith's time, described the religious conditions in the United States and yearned for modern revelations. Part of his description could aptly apply to certain people's attitude toward the Book of Mormon. To quote Emerson:

. . . the need was never greater for new revelation than now. . . . [There has been a] universal decay and now almost death of faith in society. The soul is not preached. The Church seems to totter to its fall, almost all life extinct. . . .

Men have come to speak of revelation as somewhat long ago given and done, as if God were dead. The injury to faith throttles the preacher; and the godliest of institutions becomes an uncertain and inarticulate voice.⁴

In moments when gleams of prophetic light flashed across Emerson's mind, he predicted what Latter-day Saints could easily believe to be fulfilled in the person of the Prophet Joseph Smith. To quote:

We are now so far from the road of truth, that religious teachers dispute and hate each other, . . .

The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. . . . Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us? . . .⁵

³Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price.

⁴Frederic I. Carpenter, *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, pp. 79-80.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 8: PYRAMID OF THE SUN, TEOTIHUACAN

Three Aztec Indians in native costumes are also shown in the photograph.

I look for the hour when the supreme Beauty which ravished the souls of those Eastern men, and chiefly of those Hebrews, and through their lips spoke oracles to all times, shall speak in the West also. . . . I look for the new Teacher that shall follow so far those shining laws that he shall see them come full circle; . . . and shall show that the Right, the Duty, is one thing with Science, with Beauty, and with joy.⁶

CERTAIN NON-CHURCH MEMBERS' EVALUATION OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

There are also other people who accept the claims made by the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon as being historically true; however, they are not willing to leave father and mother, house and land, business and social position, wife and child to become affiliated with the true Church of Jesus Christ. I shall illustrate this point by describing an experience I had while attending the University of California. I was doing graduate work under Dr. Herbert E. Bolton, one of America's greatest historians and one of the best teachers that I have ever had. One day he was giving

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 88.

a lecture to approximately three hundred students regarding a heavenly visitation which an Indian in Mexico was reported to have had which resulted in the building of the cathedral of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Suddenly he shifted subjects in the middle of his lecture and told the story of Joseph Smith's First Vision. Then he delineated the numerous appearances of the Angel Moroni to the Prophet Joseph Smith and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. He told all of those things as clearly and accurately as the Prophet had recorded them; and then he said: "Since I am a historian, I must take the word of people regarding their own personal experiences; and so I accept Joseph Smith's account of his visions and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon as being historically accurate and true. I see no other logical explanation to account for the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the establishing of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." However, Dr. Bolton never joined the Church.

During the century and a quarter that have elapsed since the Book of Mormon was first published, continuously that volume has been one of America's best sellers, perhaps being exceeded only by the Bible. Also, it has been translated and published in many of the languages of the world. It has taken its place in American religious literature as one of the most broadly distributed, widely read, and most influential volumes that have been produced on this continent. Each year sees a marked increase in the number of copies published and distributed. In regard to the influence of the Book of Mormon on the American religious scene, Henry A. Wallace, former United States Secretary of Agriculture (a non-Mormon), concluded:

Of all the American religious books of the nineteenth century it seems probable that the Book of Mormon was the most powerful. It reached perhaps only one percent of the people of the United States, but it affected this one percent so powerfully and lastingly that all the people of the United States have been affected, especially by its contributions in opening up one of our great frontiers.⁷

Dr. Marcus Bach, claimed to be one of the foremost authorities on the lesser-known religions in America, in his efforts to become acquainted with the history and teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, purchased a copy of the Book of Mormon. He wrote his appraisal of that book as follows:

⁷Henry A. Wallace, in an address delivered before the New York *Times* National Book Fair. Reprinted in the *Salt Lake Tribune* (November 8, 1937), p. 13.

So I paged through this American Bible wondering how many Protestants had ever seen a copy or read a verse out of any of the fifteen books. Wherever these auxiliary scriptures came from, whatever they were, they surpassed in magnitude and content my most extravagant expectations. The style was Biblical, the references to Holy Writ were voluminous, the ancient story was tremendously involved. It was not the kind of book a man would read for pastime or write for profit. It was solemn and ponderous and heavy as the plates on which it was inscribed. *No Vermont schoolboy wrote this, and no Presbyterian preacher tinkered with these pages!*

After wading through the First Book of Nephi, *I was ready to settle for the miracle of Cumorah and let it go at that.* It would surely be convenient to say, "The plates for this religious tome were hidden by an angel, discovered by a young man whom the Lord had chosen and translated by means of magic spectacles." That, of course, was exactly what the Book of Mormon itself implied. Mormon, one of God's elect, was the father of Moroni, and together they were the engravers and concealers of the ancient manuscript.⁸

⁸Marcus Bach, *Faith and My Friends* (New York, 1951), pp. 255-256. Italics supplied by the writer.

CHAPTER 3

BOOK OF MORMON EVIDENCES

EVIDENCES SUSTAINING THE BOOK OF MORMON INCREASING

Since the day that the Angel Moroni gave the gold plates to Joseph Smith from which the Prophet translated and published the Book of Mormon, a vast amount of marvelous evidences has accumulated. These evidences sustain the divine authenticity and truthfulness of that holy ancient record. Perhaps there has been as much new, valid evidence sustaining the claims of the Book of Mormon come forth during the past quarter of a century as the combined amount which accumulated during the previous hundred years. This vast accumulation of evidences—some of which speak as it were from the dust and others from the ancient past—continue to bear witness to the divinity of this sacred book and to its truthfulness.

Beyond a shadow of doubt, the Book of Mormon is the word of God, a divine and sacred book, preserved by the Lord and his holy angels to come forth in the latter days as a new witness to Jesus Christ and the gospel which he proclaimed.

We shall now discuss some of the astounding Book of Mormon evidences, listing them under three major headings: first—archaeological evidences; second—writings of sixteenth century Indian historians; and third—writings of sixteenth century Catholic missionaries who secured their information firsthand from the Indians.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCES SUPPORTING BOOK OF MORMON CLAIMS

American archaeology had its birth shortly before the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith. John Lloyd Stephens had visited most of the Central American countries, and the states of Chiapas (Chee-op'-us) and Yucatán in Mexico. After he had come back to the United States, he had written a glowing report of the beautiful temples, pyramids, and other archaeological remains which dotted the jungles of Central America and Mexico.⁹ From the time of the

⁹John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatán* (New York, 1841); and *Incidents of Travel in Yucatán* (New York, 1843).



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 9: TEMPLE OF THE MASKS AT KABAĦ, YUCATAN

Temple of the Masks at Kabah, Yucatán, Mexico. One of the most beautiful of the Maya temples, built probably during the ninth century.

Fig. 10: LA VENTA STELA. BEARDED MAN—"UNCLE SAM"

Description of photograph on page twenty-six: The sheltered underside of a large stela excavated at La Venta, Tabasco, Mexico, shows a Hebraic-like face with a long flowing beard. "His aquiline nose and aristocratic features were different from all other faces depicted at the site." (Stirling, 1940, p. 327.) The stela was made by the Olmec people, who could have been Mulekites. This carving could be a representation of an important priest who lived near the time of the Savior. Also, observe the man with a beard toward the top of the stela. (From National Geographic Society—Smithsonian Institution Archaeological Expedition to southern Mexico in 1939-1940. Courtesy of *National Geographic Magazine*.)

publishing of Stephens' two books, the governments of Mexico, Central America, and portions of South America, and particularly archaeological organizations from the United States and her neighbors to the south, have spent vast amounts of money, and have exerted an untold amount of effort at numerous of these archaeological sites. Also, considerable work has been done in reconstructing

the ancient buildings. In reconstructing these marvelous pyramids, temples, and other archaeological ruins, the archaeologists and their helpers have placed the stones as nearly as possible in place as they were when the ancient Americans first erected the buildings. The result is that today the country from north of Mexico City southward to Chile is literally dotted with numerous archaeological sites, many of which have been excavated by archaeologists.

In 1939-1940, Dr. Matthew W. Stirling of the Smithsonian Institution conducted an archaeological expedition into the jungles of southern Mexico. The expedition was sponsored by the National Geographic Society and the Smithsonian Institution. In the jungles of western Tabasco, situated near the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, Dr. Stirling excavated at a famous archaeological site named La Venta. The people who had lived there in ancient times and had erected the archaeological structures were the Olmecs (Ōl-mecs). It is possible that they could have been the Mulekites of Book of Mormon times.¹⁰ Dr. Stirling is credited with dating the Olmec culture from B.C. 450 to A.D. 600.¹¹ Miguel Covarrubias, speaking the views of the Mexican archaeologists, places La Venta when it “. . . served as the religious—and perhaps political—capital of the Olmec civilization”¹² at A.D. 300.¹³ According to an article which appeared recently in the *National Geographic Magazine*:

These people had developed a knowledge of mathematics and apparently of hieroglyphics, and were using an excellent pre-Mayan calendar. Their citizens included some first-rate architects, engineers, artists, and jewelers. Incredibly, they managed to move single stones weighing as much as 30 tons to La Venta from quarries some 60 miles away.¹⁴

In 1939 Dr. Matthew W. Stirling made an archaeological find at La Venta of great importance. It was a carving of a statue of a man which reminds one of the usual portrayal of “Uncle Sam.”¹⁵ This figure had a full flowing beard and an aquiline nose, constituting a good representation of a Hebrew priest. Covarrubias described the figure as one representing a person having “. . . surprising pro-

¹⁰Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon* (Oakland, California, 1950), pp. 20, 171.

¹¹A. Hyatt Verrill, *Americas' Ancient Civilizations* (1953), p. 100.

¹²Philip Drucker and Robert F. Heizer, “Gifts for the Jaguar God,” *The National Geographic Magazine* (Washington, D. C., September, 1956), vol. 110, p. 367.

¹³Miguel Covarrubias, *Mexico South—The Isthmus of Tehuantepec* (1946), pp. 79-80.

¹⁴Drucker and Heizer, *op. cit.*, p. 367.

¹⁵Matthew W. Stirling, *National Geographic Magazine* (Sept. 1940), p. 327; Hunter and Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-135, 173.

nounced Semitic features."¹⁶ Stirling points out that the figure is depicted as wearing ". . . shoes with odd-pointed, upturned toes."¹⁷ Neither the shoes nor the face and flowing beard of "Uncle Sam" could have been a representation of a red-skinned Indian,¹⁸ but, as stated, it strongly resembles a Jewish priest of pre-Christian times.

Dr. Stirling also found in southwestern Mexico at Izapa (Ee-säp'-ä) a stone covered with carvings which have been interpreted by Dr. M. Wells Jakeman of Brigham Young University as a representation of Lehi's dream of the "Tree of Life," recorded in 1 Nephi 8:1-38. To quote Dr. Jakeman:

. . . the resemblance of this sculpture to the Book of Mormon account cannot be accidental. . . . It practically establishes . . . an historical connection . . . between the ancient Central American priests responsible for the sculpture and the Lehi people of the Book of Mormon! Indeed, the accurate and detailed knowledge of Lehi's vision . . . displayed by these priests in this sculpture, can be explained only by their identification as an actual group of the Lehi people.¹⁹

The marvelous archaeological finds at Palenque (Pä-len'-kay) in the Usumacinta (You-soo-ma-seen'-tä) Valley—especially the crosses and the Egyptian-type burials, the famous ruins of the Old Mayan Empire in Honduras and Guatemala—especially those at Tikal (Tee-käl), Copán (Cō-pän'), Uaxactún (Wäsh-äck-toon'), and Quiriguá (Kee-ree-gwa'), all bear testimony to the Book of Mormon claims that high civilizations flourished in ancient America. The late Dr. Sylvanus G. Morley maintained that the Maya history had its beginnings as early as B.C. 300²⁰ and that pre-Maya history extends back to about B.C. 3,000.²¹ The former date would reach in the earlier part of Nephite history, and the latter would extend to the beginnings of Jaredite history.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCES IN THE ANDEAN REGION

When one considers all of the wonderful archaeological remains in Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, and other Central American

¹⁶Covarrubias, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

¹⁷Stirling, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

¹⁸Sylvanus G. Morley, *The Ancient Maya*, p. 21, stated: "The Maya are not a hairy people. The men either have no beards and moustaches at all, or only very meager, sparse ones, while other parts of their body have less hair than is the case of American whites." The same facts hold true with the majority of American Indians in general.

¹⁹M. Wells Jakeman, "An Unusual Tree of Life Sculpture from Ancient Central America," *Bulletin of the University Archaeological Society* (March, 1953), pp. 26-49.

²⁰Morley, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 38, 44.



countries, and also carefully studies those of South America, one comes to the conclusion that those of the northern hemisphere do not surpass the marvelous archaeological ruins found in Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Colombia. Numerous buildings have been excavated and some of them reconstructed. Thousands of graves have been opened and from them have been taken the most beautiful and artistic workings in gold, silver, copper, and precious stones of various kinds.²² Also, from those graves have been taken the most finely woven, beautiful laces, the most gorgeous wool and cotton cloths, and "fine-twined linen." In fact, various archaeologists maintain that the world has known no races of people who surpassed the predecessors of the Inca civilization in these various handicrafts. For example, A. Hyatt Verrill states:

Despite the high attainment in art, engineering, astronomy and government, which were reached by the Aztecs, the Incas, the Mayas, and others, in a way these unknown, forgotten races of South America were more remarkable, and were unquestionably far more ancient. From the Chibcha (Cheeb'-cha) district in Colombia to northern Chile, numerous races rose to a civilized state, vanished and were forgotten centuries before the first Montezuma or the first Inca saw the light of day.²³

As a general rule, when we find a race excelling in some one art or occupation we find the people deficient in some other art or industry but the Chimus (Chee'-mus) appear to have been masters of all trades. Their textiles, especially their laces, were marvelous examples of weaving and their mosaic and mother-of-pearl work was exquisite. Many specimens of these are truly wonderful examples of this highly developed art. There are vases, cups, ceremonial utensils, ear plugs, breast plates, wooden utensils, objects made of clay and of bone that are highly and most artistically embellished with mosaic inlay of mother-of-pearl, the red Spondylus shell, colored stone and precious metals. Many of their robes and ponchos of magnificent textiles are completely covered with ornaments of gold, silver, mother-of-pearl and sections of bright colored sea shells arranged in charming patterns so as to give the effect of a mosaic cloth.

They were also highly skilled wood carvers and there is scarcely a wooden object that is not handsomely carved. . . . They had developed a unique method of weaving feathers into cloth thus producing feather robes, tunics, head coverings, etc., that are gorgeous in color and design. . . .

Even in their ordinary metal work the Chimus exhibited the greatest skill and a most artistic taste. Metals were cast, embossed, etched, engraved, pressed, hammered, spun or built up into innumerable forms by welding and soldering. In fact every means of working metals known to modern artisans was employed by the Chimus.²⁴

²²Verrill, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-195.

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 148, 174-175, 183, 210.

²⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 154-157.

It is to be recalled that the Book of Mormon history took place during the period between the building of the Tower of Babel and A.D. 421, the period during which the ancient Americans made their greatest achievements in the various handicrafts as described by



Early Chimú pottery jar of a bearded man, from the Chicama Valley, northern Peru, which would date perhaps in the early Christian centuries. Peruvian tradition speaks of a white race of bearded men who came to Peru to institute culture long before Inca time; and these white people were visited by Viracocha. (Photo: Mus. f. Volkerkunde, Berlin. Courtesy of Rand McNally & Co. Reproduced from Thor Heyerdahl, "American Indians in the Pacific," 1952, Plate XXIV.)

Fig. 11: EARLY CHIMU POTTERY JAR DECORATED WITH BEARDED MAN

Dr. Verrill. The Jaredites, however, were confined to the land northward throughout most of their history. Also, we should recall that the Book of Mormon made such claims as follows:

[The Jaredites had] . . . all manner of fruit, and of grain, and of silks, and of fine linen, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious things.²⁵

[The Nephites and Mulekites also had an abundance] . . . of all things whatsoever they stood in need—and abundance . . . of gold, and of silver, and of precious things, and abundance of silk and fine-twined linen, and all manner of good homely cloth.²⁶

²⁵Ether 9:17.

²⁶Alma 1:29; 4:6.

Later during the Nephite period, we read:

And behold, there was all manner of gold in both these lands, and of silver, and of precious ore of every kind; and there were also curious workmen, who did work all kinds of ore and did refine it; and thus they did become rich. . . .

Behold their women did toil and spin, and make all manner of cloth, of fine-twined linen and cloth of every kind, to clothe their nakedness.²⁷

Certainly all of these archaeological remains fit well with the Book of Mormon claims regarding the Jaredite, Nephite, and Mulekite civilizations; and so archaeology speaks as it were from the dust, verifying the Book of Mormon to be true—to be the word of God.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCES OF CHRIST'S APPEARANCE TO THE NEPHITES

The Book of Mormon gives a beautiful account of Christ's appearance to the Nephites following his crucifixion and resurrection.²⁸ He gave the true gospel plan of salvation to them; and the people lived in almost perfect righteousness for over two hundred years. Certainly Christ's visit constituted one of the greatest events, if not the greatest, that ever occurred in ancient America.

Following the apostasy of the Nephites and the Lamanites from the true religion of the Master and the extermination of the Nephite civilization (about A.D. 400), the Lamanites or Indians retained in their traditions a memory of the appearance of the resurrected Savior to their forefathers. When the Spanish Catholic *padres*, the French missionaries, and the English explorers first visited the numerous American aborigines throughout the Western Hemisphere, they found traditions among practically every Indian tribe, especially the more civilized peoples of Peru, Central America, Guatemala, Yucatán, and Mexico, to the effect that their ancestors had been visited by a "White Bearded God," who had given them their culture, their civilization, and their religion, and had promised them that some day he would return to their descendants. These traditions account for the easy conquest of Mexico and Peru by the Spaniards; but more important, they all bear witness to Christ's appearance to the ancient Americans, as delineated so vividly in the Book of Mormon.

²⁷Helaman 6:11, 13; Mosiah 10:5.

²⁸3 Nephi, chapters 11 to 28, pp. 420-453.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 12: DECORATED PILLAR OF TEMPLE AT EL TAJIN

The author studying the carvings on a pillar of an ancient temple built by the Totonac people at El Tajin, Vera Cruz, Mexico. The temple perhaps was erected a few centuries following the close of the Book of Mormon period by descendants of the Nephites and Lamanites. Note Quetzalcoatl symbols—serpents and quetzal feathers.

Throughout Mexico the “White Bearded God” was known by the name of Quetzalcoatl (Ket-sal-co-watl’). In Yucatán he was called Kukulcan (Koo-kul-con’). Viracocha (Vē-rä-kō’chä) was the name given to him by the Indians of Peru; and other Indian tribes called him by various names. By whatever name he appeared in Indian traditions, he always had the same characteristics, and there was a general agreement in the various traditions regarding his accomplishments. Those people who are familiar with the teachings of the Book of Mormon and Indian traditions can readily recognize the Fair God of ancient America as being none other than Jesus Christ.

According to one popular tradition, the "White Bearded God" came to the inhabitants of ancient America through the air, and as he descended to earth the sun's rays sparkled on his beautiful white body and clothing. Quetzal (ket-'sal) is the name of a beautiful bird with resplendent long green feathers, found mainly in the highlands of Chiapas, Guatemala, and Honduras.²⁹ The quetzal bird as it flew through the air reminded the Indians of the glorious beauty and radiant splendor of the "White Bearded God" who had appeared to their ancestors; and so the ancient worshipers added a pagan touch to that memorable event by selecting the most beautiful, highly prized bird of the New World, the quetzal, as a symbol of the Fair God, or Jesus Christ. Also, coatl, or serpent, was an ancient symbol of Israel's Anointed One.³⁰ And they adopted also another symbol, the serpent or rattlesnake. Coatl (co-watl') is the ancient Mexican word for serpent.³¹ Thus, the Indians commemorated their "White Bearded God" with the symbol of "Quetzal-bird serpent" or Quetzalcoatl.³²

The Temple of Quetzalcoatl, located at Teotihuacán (Tay'-ō-tee'-wah-con'), approximately twenty-six miles north of Mexico City, is of special interest to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This temple is decorated with serpent heads surrounded with quetzal feathers, symbols of Quetzalcoatl, or Jesus Christ.

Also, of special interest to members of the Church of Jesus Christ are the beautiful and famous archaeological ruins in Yucatán, especially those at Chichén Itzá, Uxmal (Oosh'-mäl), and Kabah (Kâ-bah'). The massive pyramids, temples, and other important structures were erected during the tenth century A.D., constituting the workmanship of the New Mayan Empire. Those Mayas of Yucatán, as had the Toltecs (Töl'-teks) of Teotihuacán, worshiped the "White Bearded God," whom they called Kukulcan. They carved motifs to Kukulcan on their buildings similar to those at Teotihuacán and at other Mexican sites, i.e., the plumed serpent.³³

²⁹Hunter and Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 199, 195-222.

³⁰Maurice H. Farbridge, *Studies in Biblical and Semitic Symbolism*, p. 25; Numbers 21:8-9.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 199; Verrill, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-111.

³²George C. Vaillant, *Aztecs of Mexico* (New York, 1950), p. 52; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *Native Races* (New York, 1875), vol. 2, p. 511 ff.; Hunter and Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-222; Verrill, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 101 ff.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 13: DETAILS OF BAS-RELIEF PYRAMID OF XOCHICALCO

Details of bas-relief on the pyramid of Xochicalco, Morelos, Mexico. The large serpent which entwines around the pyramid and the man wearing a headdress of quetzal feathers indicate that the builders of Xochicalco were worshippers of Quetzalcoatl—"The White Bearded God," or Jesus Christ.

In fact, the plumed serpent is extensively used in decorating all of their buildings.

Also, the Mayas decorated their buildings with another motif or symbol—that of bearded white men bedecked with quetzal feathers. The latter carvings represented priests of Kukulcan (Quetzalcoatl), and some of them probably Kukulcan himself. These bearded men are definitely not of Indian type but are of Hebraic type. Theodore Arthur Willard points out that the ancient sculptures and murals found in Maya cities, especially at Chichén Itzá, have a distinctly Semitic cast, and that they are strikingly Hebraic in appearance.³⁴

The ancestors of the American Indians—the Nephites, Lamanites, and Mulekites—were Hebrews. The first colonists came from

³⁴Theodore Arthur Willard, *The City of the Sacred Well*, p. 36.

Jerusalem. Father Lehi, one of the prophet-leaders of the Nephites, was a descendant of Manasseh; and Manasseh was a descendant of Abraham, the first man to be called a Hebrew. Ishmael, the head of the other family who came to America with Lehi, was a descendant of Ephraim, Manasseh's brother. Mulek, after whom the Mulekites were named, was a descendant of Judah; and perhaps the entire group that came with him were Jews. Thus the ancestors of the people at Chichén Itzá were Semites; and so it is not surprising to find that the bearded men carved on the wall of the Maya archaeological structures do have a "distinctly Semitic cast of countenance" or to find also "the dignity of face and serene poise of those carved or painted likenesses to be strikingly Hebraic."

SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF AMERICAN CULTURES FULLY DEVELOPED

Before proceeding further, we shall point out, definitely, that perhaps the majority of the archaeological ruins that have been excavated postdate Book of Mormon times, and some of them were originally erected several hundred years following the close of Nephite history. Then the reader may ask, "What evidences do those ancient ruins give to sustain the Book of Mormon?"

I shall answer as follows: The Book of Mormon claims that great civilizations lived in ancient America. As previously mentioned, that sacred record points out that three separate peoples—the Jaredites, the Nephites, and the Mulekites—came to America in ancient times and established high cultures or civilizations. Many of the most reliable archaeologists at the present time claim that a number of the archaeological remains that have been excavated were built over earlier temples, pyramids, and other buildings, connoting earlier civilizations; and in many respects these earlier peoples were more highly developed, or more civilized, than were the people who erected the buildings of the archaeological remains that we find today. After discussing many of the more civilized tribes of the American Indians, Dr. P. De Roo stated:

. . . the general traditions of enlightened mankind and the conclusions of modern science, are proof sufficient that the remote ancestors of these tribes had attained a much higher degree of civilization than that of their fallen posterity, and that they had lived at no great distance from the biblical patriarchs, who had preserved incorrupt the memory of man's primordial history and the truths of primeval divine revelation. . . .³⁵

³⁵P. De Roo, *History of America before Columbus* (Philadelphia, 1900), p. 111.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 14: ANCIENT BUILDINGS AT EL TAJIN

Beautiful buildings at El Tajin, Vera Cruz, Mexico. Quetzalcoatl symbols also decorate these archaeological structures.

It is a fact of great significance that archaeologists and anthropologists, especially those of Mexico, maintain that the famous Maya civilization, and also the Toltec, Zapotec, (Zap'-oh-teck), Olmec, Totonac, (Tō-tō'-nac), and other high Indian cultures of Mexico and Central America, as well as the ancient Andean cultures, *all were the outgrowth of an even greater civilization—“ . . . a most ancient mother culture, which is found at the bottom of the specialized cultures of central Mexico and northern Central America. . . .”*³⁶

Thor Heyerdahl points out that “. . . until very recent decades it has been the opinion of most followers of the contemporary school of anthropology that man, in all his local varieties, came to America as a savage barbarian, . . . Many have even inclined to the belief that, from an archaic culture based on primitive hunting and collecting, high-culture with all its diversified aspects developed out of savage mentality and activities, each tribe and nation beginning from the bottom, independent of other American cultures, and developing analogous features merely through the parallel inclinations of human nature.”³⁷ He continues by pointing out that this theory is rapidly losing supporters, since it fails “. . . to find verification

³⁶Alfonso Caso, cited in Sylvanus G. Morley, *The Ancient Maya* (Palo Alto, Calif., 1947), p. 42.

³⁷Thor Heyerdahl, *American Indians in the Pacific* (Stockholm, Sweden, 1952), p. 285.

or support in archaeological material and excavations.”³⁸ The opinions of many archaeologists today, especially those of Mexico, are in agreement with the following quotation from S. Linne, whose statement was made in 1939:

In the Valley of Mexico, the archaeologists have penetrated as far down as to the times of the primitive agriculturists, the so-called archaic culture. Here, already, we are confronted with the peculiar phenomenon characteristic of America, that the cultures appear suddenly, quite readily formed and without strong relations between each other. Subsequently they develop further, within the limits of a narrow margin, then disappear to be succeeded by others. A new stock with other artistic intentions but in many ways with corresponding modes of living, weapons, and tools, have taken possession of the land.³⁹

In his recent voluminous work, *American Indians in the Pacific*, Thor Heyerdahl quotes leading anthropologists and archaeologists who are in agreement with Linne’s statement, and then he summarizes his own findings as follows:

This sudden appearance and disappearance of American culture in full bloom, and with such elaborate and intricate standards that we often find in subsequent periods signs of retrogression or cultural decay rather than a maintenance of the original knowledge and achievements, is as typical of high-culture of South America as of those of Mexico and Yucatán. If each of these American cultures and civilizations had been independently developed by the savages within its own area, one would expect, at least in some localities to find traces of a slow evolution from low and primitive forms. But as we do not, we should at least simplify our problems by admitting the possibility that high-culture may have been developed by aboriginals in one area and spread as an inspiration to others.⁴⁰

As early as 1925, Dr. A. L. Kroeber, one of America’s outstanding anthropologists under whom I had the privilege of studying at the University of California, announced that his studies in Peru supplied definite proof that that region “had received impulses from the Isthmus or Mexico.”⁴¹ Five years later he published a paper entitled “Cultural Relations between North and South America” in which he pointed out that the cultures of Meso-America and Peru were basically very similar. He claimed that there was a fundamental unity underlying the Mexican and Peruvian conceptions and products, stating: “There is too much in common to believe

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 285.

³⁹S. Linne, cited in *ibid.*

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 285-286.

⁴¹A. L. Kroeber, *The Uhle Pottery Collection from Moche*, University of Calif. Publ. in *American Archaeology and History*, vol. 1, No. 7.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 15: TEMPLE OF VENUS AT KABAĦ, YUCATAN

This is one of the beautiful Maya temples erected by skilled artisans.

otherwise.”⁴² Dr. Kroeber regards the Peruvian cultures “probably a little younger than the Mexican.” In agreement with the Mexican archaeologists and Thor Heyerdahl, speaking of the Mexican and Peruvian cultures, Dr. Kroeber positively declared: “*In each case the culture meets us full blown.*”⁴³ And then he called attention to the Indians’ traditions of a white and bearded race of culture institutors and concluded that those people may have been responsible for the mother culture’s appearing originally in “full bloom” in the various countries of the New World preceding the rise of inferior Indian cultures.

The outstanding Mexican archaeologists date the ancient high culture of La Venta during the period from B.C. 200 to A.D. 300, and that particular period covers the time when the Nephites and Mulekites attained their greatest heights in civilization. Perhaps the following statement from Miguel Covarrubias pinpoints the ancient “mother culture” as to the time of its sudden appearance more definitely than do the writings of any other authors:

Everywhere there are archaeological treasures that lie hidden in the

⁴²Kroeber, *Cultural Relations Between North and South America*, Proc. 23rd Int. Congr. Americanists, New York (New York, 1930).

⁴³*Idem.*

jungles and under the rich soil of southern Vera Cruz, burial mounds and pyramids, masterfully carved colossal monuments of basalt, splendid statuettes of precious jade, and sensitively modeled figurines of clay, all of an unprecedented, high artistic quality. The tantalizing presence of a great and remote past in what is now uninhabited, impenetrable jungle is all the more puzzling because *most archaeologists now agree that many of these artistic masterpieces date back to the beginnings of the Christian era. Appearing suddenly out of nowhere in a state of full development, they constitute a culture that seems to have been the root, the mother culture, from which the later and better-known (Maya, Totonac, Zapotec, etc.) cultures sprang.*

This oldest of native American high cultures is also the newest, since it was "discovered" only a few years ago and still awaits exhaustive scientific study.⁴⁴

Latter-day Saints know that following the flood the three oldest "native American high cultures" were developed by the Jaredites, Nephites, and Mulekites, the latter two peoples uniting together about B.C. 200. The Olmec carving of a man ("Uncle Sam") at La Venta, who had a white flowing beard and possessed "surprising pronounced Semitic features" which strongly resembled a Jewish priest of pre-Christian times, seems to indicate definitely that the Nephite-Mulekite culture was the ancient "mother culture" spoken of by the foregoing archaeologists and anthropologists.

Thor Heyerdahl agrees with the famous anthropologist, Dr. A. L. Kroeber, in giving credit to a white race for establishing the high American culture anciently which served as the "mother culture" of all later Indian achievements. In the words of Heyerdahl:

The specified traditions of light-skinned and bearded founders of culture were most prominent and complete among the Aztec, Maya, Chibcha, and Inca nations, that is, among the natives with the highest cultural standing in the New World, and we have also ample evidence to verify that these historic nations really did owe their cultural standing to other people with even more impressive high-cultures who had been active in just these same localities in earlier times. These original culture-bearers are known to us only through their archaeological remains, chiefly consisting of deserted ecclesiastical sites. It is noteworthy that all the known culture peoples concerned disclaim the honour of having constructed these monuments, or of having originated their own cultural standards, and give all the credit to foreign intruders remembered as having lighter skins than themselves, long beards, marked ecclesiastic interests and benevolent characters.⁴⁵

Could one have given a more accurate and beautiful description of the ancient Nephites—with their high culture, holy prophets, true

⁴⁴Miguel Covarrubias, *Mexico South—the Isthmus of Tehuantepec* (1946), p. 80. Italics supplied by the author.

⁴⁵Heyerdahl, *op. cit.*, p. 284.



—*Photograph by Otto Done*

Fig. 16: MAYA CERAMICS, GUATEMALA MUSEUM

An example of artistically designed ceramics made in ancient times by the Mayas of Guatemala.

gospel of Jesus Christ, and strong ecclesiastical interests—even if he were thoroughly acquainted with the Book of Mormon account, than the foregoing statement made by Thor Heyerdahl, a non-Church member? As archaeological evidences have continued to accumulate—especially during the past few years—and as historical facts of America’s ancient civilizations have continued to be gathered and correlated with archaeological findings, they have all united in verifying the claims made by the ancient prophets of Book of Mormon days, claims which were translated from “gold

plates” and published in 1830 by the Prophet Joseph Smith. An abundance of truth has come from the ground to testify to the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are in complete agreement with Dr. Kroeber and Heyerdahl in regards to a white race being the founders of that marvelous “ancient mother culture”; and furthermore we know who those culture founders were. They were the Nephites and the Mulekites who had migrated to America from Jerusalem shortly after B.C. 600 and had merged together approximately four hundred years later. The culture they established is beautifully described in the Book of Mormon. From it sprang the astonishing Indian cultures of later dates.

WRITINGS OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY INDIAN HISTORIANS SUPPORTING BOOK OF MORMON CLAIMS

The writings of the sixteenth century Indian historians supply numerous strong evidences verifying Book of Mormon claims. When the Spanish *conquistadores* were conquering Mexico and Yucatán and the Catholic *padres* were attempting to teach Christianity to the natives, they found that the Indians had many books—large libraries. Many of the Indians knew how to read and write and were more civilized than were their conquerers from Europe. In order to destroy as far as possible the natives’ civilization and do away with what the Spanish priests termed “the Indians’ wicked paganism,” the Catholic *padres* burned all of the books that they could find, completely destroying the libraries of the American aborigines. This terrible act of vandalism resulted in a terrific loss to our understanding of the history of the Indians and their ancestors. In the words of Franz Blom, an outstanding archaeologist and highly recognized authority on the Mayas:

Flames devoured the precious Maya books, in which were written the astronomical annotations of a calendar far superior to that used by the Spaniards, the list of good and bad days, the ancient history. Those flames of the *auto da fé* at Mani destroyed the cornerstone of the Maya civilization, reduced to ashes the scientific backbone of a highly civilized people and sounded the death-knell of independent Maya thought. (No wonder that the Maya sages and priests cried from their hearts, and that some of them even committed suicide.) Raging armies of *conquistadores* could not by their murdering and looting have dealt a more fatal blow than that which was given under the sign of the cross.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Franz Blom, *The Conquest of Yucatán*, p. 109.

It was fortunate, however, that a few excellent manuscripts written by Indian historians during the first century of their contact with the Spaniards escaped that ruthless destruction. Most of those writings have been translated into English during the past several years.

One of those important writings was produced in 1554, in the Quiché (Key-chay') Maya Indian language of Guatemala, and ". . . signed by the kings and dignitaries of the Quiché court."⁴⁷ It is known as the *Title of the Lords of Totonicapán* (Tō-tō-nee-cá-pon'). At the request of the Quiché Indians, Dionisio José Chonay, a Catholic priest, translated the document from the Quiché language into Spanish in 1834. It was first translated into English by Delia Goetz and published in 1953. However, Dr. M. Wells Jakeman published in English extracts from the Spanish version in 1945, this being the first time that any of this work had appeared in English. The *Totonicapán* claims that the ancestors of the Quiché Mayas

. . . came from the other part of the ocean, from where the sun rises, a place called *Pa Tulan, Pa Civán* [meaning Bountiful] . . . and they came from where the sun rises, descendants of Israel, of the same language and the same customs. . . . They were sons of Abraham and Jacob.⁴⁸

And then the authors of *Totonicapán* close their account as follows:

Now on the twenty-eighth of September of 1554 we sign this attestation in which *we have written* that which by tradition our ancestors told us, who came from the other part of the sea, from Civán-Tulan, bordering on Babylonia.⁴⁹

These statements are all in perfect agreement with the claims made in the Book of Mormon.⁵⁰ We should recall that Nephi and his brethren built their ship at a place which they named Bountiful which was located on the southeastern shores of Arabia or "bordering on Babylonia"; and from that place they set sail for America.⁵¹

The *Totonicapán* also claims that God gave to their original prophet-leader a peculiar instrument, called *Giron-Gagal*, through the power of which the people were guided to their new home.⁵²

⁴⁷*Title of the Lords of Totonicapán*, p. 164.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 169-170.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 194; Hunter and Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 56-64, 7, 80-84, 250.

⁵⁰1 Nephi 17:40.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 17:5-7.

⁵²*Totonicapán*, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

One is reminded of the Liahona which was given by the Lord to Father Lehi.⁵³

Another Quiché Maya book, the *Popol Vuh* (Pō'-pōl Voo), which was much more detailed than the *Totonicapán*, was written between A.D. 1554 and 1558. In its present printed form, it is a book containing over 200 pages. It might be termed the Lamanite account of their history and religion, as the Book of Mormon is the Nephite account. Regarding this book, Brasseur de Bourbourg wrote:

The *Popol Vuh* appears to have been written, in part, from memory, following ancient originals, and in part, copies from the sacred books of the Quichés, . . . This manuscript . . . is written in a Quiché of great elegance, and the author must have been one of the princes of the royal family, who composed it a few years after the arrival of the Spaniards, when all of their ancient books were disappearing.⁵⁴

The *Popol Vuh* was first translated into English by Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley and published in 1950.

In this book the Quiché Maya Indians of Guatemala gave an account of the creation of the world,⁵⁵ of the origin of man,⁵⁶ of the flood,⁵⁷ of the confusion of tongues,⁵⁸ and of the coming of their ancestors across the sea from the East.⁵⁹ It also mentioned the fact that the colonizers were guided to their new home by a peculiar instrument, called *Pizom-Gagal*,⁶⁰ comparable to the Nephite Liahona. Thus the *Popol Vuh* in many items sustains the teachings of the more beautiful and complete account of the history and religion of the early Americans found in the Book of Mormon.

A third book written by the Indians of Guatemala, *The Annals of the Cakchiquels* (Cak-chee-kels'), also bears witness to the teachings of the Book of Mormon. The writers, the Cakchiquel Indians, were a branch of the Quiché Mayas. The following is quoted from their writings:

I shall write the stories of our first fathers and grandfathers, . . . that from the other side of the sea we came to the place called Tulan [Bountiful].

⁵³1 Nephi 16:10; Alma 37:38-41.

⁵⁴Brasseur de Bourbourg, cited in *Popol Vuh*, p. 21.

⁵⁵*Popol Vuh*, pp. 81-90.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 86-89.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 18, 79-80

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 205.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 17: WHITE AND DARK PEOPLES, BONAMPAC MURALS

Reproduction of a mural depicting white and dark peoples, from the inner wall, "Temple of the Painted Walls," Bonampak, Mexico. The Book of Mormon writers claimed that ancient America was inhabited by both dark and white peoples.

Thus, then we were four families who arrived at Tulan (Too-lon'), we the Cakchiquel people, oh, our sons! so they told us.⁶¹

The greatest book of the Indian writings of the sixteenth century is the *Works of Ixtlilxochitl*. It was written about A.D. 1600 by an Aztec prince named Ixtlilxochitl (Eesh-tleel-sho-cheetl') who lived near the City of Mexico.⁶² This Indian writer claimed that ancient America was settled by three distinctive groups of people. The first settlers, termed the Ancient Ones, the Giants, or the First Toltecs, he claimed came from the Tower of Babel at the time of the confounding of tongues. They came to this land across the sea from the East. Many details of their history are given by Ixtlilxochitl which correspond closely to the Jaredite history given in the book of Ether, the next to last book in the Book of Mormon.

⁶¹*The Annals of the Cakchiquels* (tr. from Cakchiquel Maya into Eng. by Adrian Recinos and Delia Goetz, 1953), pp. 43-44.

⁶²Hunter and Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-450. Perhaps the four families referred to are those of Nephi, Sam, Laman and Lemuel.

The second group of settlers Ixtlilxochitl called the Toltecs. His account of those people corresponds very closely to the story given in the Book of Mormon regarding the Nephites, event after event agreeing in their principal points. He even tells of the last great wars between the two peoples and gives important dates which occurred during those wars. Those dates are practically identical with those recorded in the Book of Mormon. The principal differences between Ixtlilxochitl's story of the Toltecs and the account of the Nephites in the Book of Mormon are that the story that Joseph Smith translated from the "gold plates" is much more detailed, as well as far superior in historical narrative and religious teachings to the account given by the Indian prince of Mexico.

According to the *Works of Ixtlilxochitl*, the third group of people who colonized ancient America were called Olmecs. We have already identified them with the Mulekites. Ixtlilxochitl claimed that the Olmecs came in contact with the few last survivors of the first settlers who had originally come from the Tower of Babel and exterminated them. This event reminds one of Coriantumr, the last Jaredite, who lived for nine months with the Mulekites before his death. Ixtlilxochitl even tells of the merging together of the Toltecs and Olmecs (Nephites and Mulekites) and of the dominance of the Toltecs' culture, which is in complete agreement with the Book of Mormon account. There is no way under heaven whereby that Mexican could have known such facts and numerous others which he recorded in his writings except through direct revelation from the Lord or from Indian traditions and records which were in his possession. He claimed Indian traditions and records as the sources of his information.

Some authors are prone to discredit the writings of Ixtlilxochitl and the other Indian historians on the grounds that they could have been influenced by the Spanish Catholic priests. It is a fact of great significance, however, that these Indian writers recorded numerous historical facts, as well as items pertaining to the social and religious teachings and customs of their ancestors, of which the Catholic *padres* could have had no knowledge save only through possessing the Book of Mormon or comparable records. Such writings the Catholic priests did not have; but the Indians did possess records and traditions of their ancestors, which resulted in their writings comparing so favorably with the Book of Mormon.

WRITINGS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES
SUPPORTING BOOK OF MORMON CLAIMS

Not only have archaeologists, anthropologists, and the writings of sixteenth century Indian historians supplied voluminous evidences sustaining the claims made by the Book of Mormon, but the journals of the sixteenth century Catholic missionaries—who obtained their information directly from the Indians—furnish valuable and extensive Book of Mormon evidences.

One of the most important of these writers was Bernardino de Sahagun (Sä-hä-noon'). He lived in Mexico from A.D. 1529 to 1590, and produced his scholarly work in Aztec in the latter part of the sixteenth century.⁶³ It is one of the most reliable and comprehensive reports concerning the ancients of Middle America. It was first published in Spanish in 1829, and since then portions of it have been published in English. Sahagun states:

Concerning the origin of these peoples, the report the old men [of central Mexico] give is that they came by sea . . . in some wooden boats. . . . But it is conjectured by a report found among all these natives that they came from seven caves, and that these seven caves are the seven ships or galleys in which the first settlers of this land came, . . .

The people first . . . came coasting along the coast disembarking in the part of Panuco, which they called Panco, which means "place where those arrived who crossed the water." This people came in search of the terrestrial paradise, and they had as a family name Tamoanchan, which means "we are looking for our home."⁶⁴

We should recall the Jaredite history which tells that the forefathers crossed the ocean in eight barges in search of ". . . the land of promise, which was choice above all other lands of the earth."⁶⁵ Sahagun's writings give numerous proofs which sustain the teachings and history of the Book of Mormon, but space will not permit giving more of them here.

Bishop Bartholome de Las Casas (Läs Cäss'-us), a prominent Catholic missionary, writing in 1552-1553, said of the Indians of Guatemala that

. . . they had among them information of the flood and of the end of the world, . . . and so they believe that another *Butic* is about to come which

⁶³Bernardino de Sahagun, *Historia de Las Cosas de Nueva Espana*, cited in Hunter and Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

⁶⁵Ether 1:42; 2:7, 15; 6:5, 12.

is another flood and judgment, not of water, but of fire which they say will be the end of the world. . . .⁶⁶

Juan de Torquemada (Tor-kay-mä'-dá), a Spanish missionary in Mexico whose book was first published in Spain in A.D. 1613, declared that “. . . the ancients . . . put [i.e., wrote or inscribed] many things in two columns, one of metal, and another of brick or stone.”⁶⁷ It should be recalled that the Jaredites and also the Nephites inscribed their histories on metal plates.

Las Casas found an abundance of teachings among the Indians which resembled Christian doctrine, and so he concluded that the devil had arrived in America ahead of the Christians and implanted in the minds and hearts of the natives many teachings closely akin to Christianity.⁶⁸ Since the Book of Mormon peoples had a thorough knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ, some of the divine truths naturally would have been handed down from age to age, probably in adulterated forms but retaining a resemblance to the original doctrines, just as gospel teachings given by the Savior in Palestine survived through the Dark Ages in altered and polluted forms but under the name of Christianity.

⁶⁶Bartolome de Las Casas, *Apologetica Historia de las Indias*, Cap. CCXXXV.

⁶⁷Juan de Torquemada, *Monarquía Indiana*, Tomo I, p. 255.

⁶⁸Hunter and Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

CHAPTER 4

HEBRAIC CHARACTERISTICS AND CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

AMERICAN INDIANS DESCENDANTS OF THE JEWS

Diego de Landa (Län'-dà), a prominent Spanish missionary in Yucatán, writing in about 1556, says that, according to the Mayas, ". . . the world was destroyed by a deluge."⁶⁹ He also stated:

Some of the older people of Yucatán say that they have heard from their ancestors that this land was occupied by a race of people who came from the East and whom God had delivered. . . . If this were true, it necessarily follows that all the inhabitants of the Indies are descendants of the Jews.⁷⁰

Antonio Vázquez de Espinosa (An-tō'-nee-ō Vas'-kes day Es-pee-nō-zà), a "barefooted Carmelite friar and Spanish author, was born in Spain in the last third of the sixteenth century and died in Seville in 1630."⁷¹ He became a distinguished theologian and missionary. He came to America and did missionary work in Peru and also throughout Mexico. He "became known as one of the most fervent missionaries in the New World."⁷² About 1622 he returned to Spain and wrote a large book entitled *Compendium and Description of the West Indies*. It was written in Spanish; and for the first time it was translated into the English language by Charles Upson Clark and published by the Smithsonian Institution on September 1, 1942.

Antonio Vázquez's book is literally filled with evidences which show that the Indians were descendants of the Jews. He studied their religious beliefs and customs thoroughly, having contacted many of the American aborigines before they were visited by other Europeans; and so he was of the firm conviction that they were of Hebraic stock. To quote from his book:

The Indians are very much like the Jews and similar to them in all re-

⁶⁹Diego de Landa, *Relacion de Las Cosas de Yucatán* (Eng. tr. by Alfred M. Tozzer, 1941).

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁷¹Antonio Vazquez de Espinosa, *Compendium and Description of the West Indies* (Eng. tr. by Charles Upson Clark, Washington, D. C., 1942), "Introduction," p. iv.

⁷²*Ibid.*



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 18: ZACULEU ARCHAEOLOGICAL ZONE, GUATEMALA

aeological structures at Zaculeu near Huehuetenango, Guatemala. In the foreground is the ancient ball court. The principal pyramid and a smaller one are shown.

spects, both in physique and temperament and in other characteristics, such as their customs, rites, ceremonies, superstitions, and idolatries. . . .⁷³

A little later he wrote:

. . . In New Spain there was a High Priest and various lesser priests, who were anointed with a certain liquid like balsam or liquidambar, mixed with the blood of children whom they circumcised. These false priests wear their hair long like the Nazarenes, and in almost everything they copied the priests of the Old Law; just as they offered animals in sacrifice, so the Indians offered them also; and just as the Hebrews of the Ten Tribes sacrificed children, so the Indians, descendants of the Ten Tribes, sacrificed them also. . . .

God commanded Abraham that boys eight days old should be circumcised; the same custom is followed by most of the Indians of New Spain, Yucatán, Cozumel, and other regions, and the Guaicurús of Paraguay: . . .

⁷³*Ibid.*, p. 24.



—Photograph by Otto Donn

Fig. 19: TEOTIHUACAN MURAL SHOWING WHITE HAND

Reproduction of part of a mural at Teotihuacán showing a white hand and indicating that a race of white people had formerly lived there.

Consequently the Indians must have adopted it from the Hebrews, from whom they are sprung.⁷⁴

As the readers have observed, in some of the quotations taken from sixteenth century Catholic missionaries, the claim was definitely made that the American Indians were descendants of the Jews. The Spanish *padres* who visited Mexico, Central America, and the Andean region of South America during the colonial period were amazed at the similarities of the Indians' religious beliefs and the teachings of the Old Testament and also Christianity; for example, they found symbols of the Trinity before Peruvian altars, a rainbow legend, and a flood story.⁷⁵ Dr. Paul Herrmann, a German scholar, in his recent book concludes that the rainbow legend and flood story "... might have come straight from the book of Genesis."⁷⁶ They probably did, since the Nephites had Genesis recorded on the brass plates.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁷⁵Paul Herrmann, *Conquest by Man* (New York, 1954), pp. 184-187.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 186.

Numerous authors who have studied the writings of the Catholic *padres* and the Indian historians, having evaluated the massive amount of valid evidence available, have arrived at the conclusion that the evidence definitely shows that the American Indians are descendants of the Jews.

M. de la Borde, a French traveler, visited various groups of the Cariban (Cà-reeb'an) Indians during the latter half of the eighteenth century. He published an account of his travels in Paris in 1785. At the time of their first contact with Europeans, the Cariban Indians occupied most of Venezuela north of the Orinoco River, and westward to the border of Colombia, possibly penetrating as far as the lower Magdalena River. The following quotation is taken from Dr. J. Fitzgerald Lee:

A celebrated French traveler, M. de la Borde (Bor-day') (*Caribbeans*, Paris, 1785) says, "Many of the Caribs (Ca-reebs') told me that their early ancestors were a great and powerful people, *whom I cannot help identifying with the Jews*. Their laws relating to marriage were the same, and they were forbidden to eat the flesh of animals like the peccary, or South American swine."⁷⁷

Dr. Lee also states:

In the early part of the eighteenth century a Dutch Jew, whose name was Aaron Levy, but who wrote under the *non de plume* Montesinus (*Travels*, Rotterdam, 1840) met with a strange people in the northern Andes, of whom he says:

"My guide was Indian—at least, so he seemed to me—and *he called his god after the name of the Hebrew God Adonai*. He told me that *in very ancient times his forefathers were called Abram, Esaak and Yakoob*; that the name of his own tribe was Rooben. Through him I made the acquaintance of a number of the men of his tribe, *whom I at once recognized as Jews*. They kissed and embraced me as a brother."⁷⁸

Lord Kingsborough from England collected large quantities of original documents in America. "Between 1830 and 1848 his *Antiquities of Mexico* were published in nine enormous volumes, . . . These contained reproductions of native codices and sculptures and rare or unpublished accounts of native life, in full or in extract, together with Kingsborough's interpretations to support his views."⁷⁹

Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson, one of America's outstanding Maya

⁷⁷J. Fitzgerald Lee, *The Great Migration* (London, 1951, p. 76.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁷⁹J. Eric S. Thompson, *The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization* (Norman, Okla., 1954) p. 33.

(Mä'yä) scholars, made the following appraisal of Kingsborough's collection:

Much of the material he put on record was of inestimable value, and, indeed, to this day, his reproductions of two or three of the Mexican codices are the only ones in existence. In the volumes are included new material on Palenque and the first reproduction of the Codex Dresden, the finest of three surviving Maya hieroglyphic books.⁸⁰

Lord Kingsborough was strongly of the opinion that the Indians descended from the Hebrews. To quote from his writings:

A very remarkable representation of the ten plagues which God sent on Egypt occurs in the eleventh and twelfth pages of the Borgian Manuscript. Moses is there painted, holding up in his left hand his rod, which became a serpent; and, with a furious gesture, calling down the plagues upon the Egyptians. These plagues were frogs, locusts, lice, flies, etc., all of which are represented in the pages referred to; but the last and most dreadful were the thick darkness which overspread Egypt for three days, and the death of the first-born of the Egyptians. The curious symbol of one serpent swallowing up others, likewise occurs in the nineteenth page of the same Manuscript. It is not extraordinary that the Mexicans who were acquainted with one por-Yucatán:

tion of the exodus—that relating to the children of Israel journeying from Egypt—should also not have been ignorant of another.⁸¹

T. A. Willard wrote the following regarding the Itzá Mayas of

It is a curious fact that the ancient Itzá Mayas had many habits and customs similar to those of the Jews. Many have remarked that some of the faces carved on the walls and stones are of the Jewish caste. . . . Both the Itzá Mayas and the Jews venerated one God, of whom they made no image. Both worshipped toward the east, and both burned incense in the four directions. The confession of sins and atonement were common to both peoples. Both believed in devils. The Mayas, like the Jews, were very punctilious about washing and making ablutions. Both venerated the serpent, and some have said the Mayas practiced circumcision.⁸²

George Jones, in his book, *History of Ancient America*, described the numerous manners, customs, and religious beliefs of the American Indians; and then he reached the following conclusion:

Many other religious customs and ceremonies exist of a minor character, yet strictly in analogy with the race of Abraham; but enough has been brought forward in this volume to propose these (as we believe) unanswerable questions; "If they are not of the Lost Tribes of Israel, who are they?"

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁸¹Lord Kingsborough, *Scraps*, p. 277.

⁸²T. A. Willard, *Lost Empires*, p. 422.

"What nation of ancient history can claim and identify those customs and observances as their own, if not the Hebrew?"⁸³

⁸³George Jones, *History of Ancient America* (New York, 1841), p. 21.



—Photograph by Author

Fig. 20: MAYA VASE DECORATED WITH HEBREW-LIKE MEN

An ancient Maya vase, housed in the Guatemala National Museum. The noses and chin beards of the two men, as well as their general appearance conform with the author's conception of the ancient Hebrews. This could show a market scene in which they are trading with each other. Their headdresses of Quetzal feathers show that they were worshipers of Quetzalcoatl.

George Catlin spent eight years (1832-1839) living with the Mandan Indians, who inhabited the region south of the Great Lakes in the United States, as well as visiting many other tribes. Independently from the writers who had visited Indians in South America, Central America, and Mexico and reported that the traditions of the Indians in those countries showed that they were descendants



—Photograph by Otto Done

1: HEBRAIC-LIKE MEN ON STELA, MEXICO MUSEUM

Stela on which two bearded men are carved who resemble the description given by the Indians of the "White Bearded God." In National Museum, Mexico City. They are Hebraic-like in appearance. Quetzal feathers connote that they are worshipers of Quetzalcoatl.

of the Jews, Catlin also concluded that the North Americans were of Jewish origin. To quote his exact words:

The first and most striking fact amongst the North American Indians that refers us to the Jews is that of their worshipping, in all parts, the Great Spirit, or Jehovah, as the Hebrews were ordered to do by divine precept, instead of a plurality of gods, as ancient pagans and heathens did, and their idols of their own formation. The North American Indians are nowhere idolators. They appeal at once to the Great Spirit and know of no mediator, either personal or symbolical. . . . Among the list of their customs, we meet a number which had their origin in the Jewish ceremonial code, and which are so very peculiar in their forms that it would seem quite improbable and almost impossible that two different people should ever have hit upon them alike, without some knowledge of each other.⁵⁴

When Lehi and his family came to America from Jerusalem, they brought with them on brass plates the Hebrew scriptures which were comparable to our Old Testament down to the time of Jeremiah; in fact, the brass plates even contained teachings of prophets

⁵⁴George Catlin, *The North American Indians . . . written during eight years travel amongst the wildest tribes in North America, 1832-1839* (Edinburgh, 1926), p. 185.

that we do not have today in the Old Testament. The Nephite prophets taught the people the details of the history and religion of their ancestors just as the Jews did in Jerusalem. Speaking of the American Indians, Dr. P. De Roo stated

... that the remote ancestors of these tribes had attained a much higher degree of civilization than that of their fallen posterity, and that they had lived at no great distance from the biblical patriarchs, who had preserved incorrupt the memory of man's primordial history and the truths of divine revelation.⁸⁵

The fact that the Nephites possessed the ancient Hebrew scripture (Old Testament) and had a thorough knowledge of its contents during Book of Mormon days accounts for the Indians' religious traditions being Hebraic; and so one is not surprised to learn that during the colonial period numerous missionaries and explorers who had had close contact with the Indians claimed that they were descendants of the Jews. At least part of the ancestry of the American Indians came from Jerusalem; however, evidence is available which shows that people from other lands migrated to the Western Hemisphere following the close of Book of Mormon history.

INDIANS' RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND CHRISTIANITY

Many writers have not only claimed that the American Indians were familiar with Old Testament religious teachings and history but a number of them have also maintained that Indian traditions definitely show that Christianity had been taught to their ancestors in ancient times; for example, F. Martin Brown stated:

Several of the rites that were common to the earlier civilizations are to be found in the Aztec ritual. It was the discovery of baptism, communion and confession and the use of the cross by these Indians that led the Spaniards to believe that at some time in the past they had been Christianized and were at the time backsliders, and therefore should be punished severely.⁸⁶

Dr. P. De Roo gives much evidence in his writings which definitely shows that Christianity was taught to the ancestors of the American Indians. His conclusion that Christianity was given to the ancient Americans during the early part of the Christian era is very significant, since that conclusion coincides with the facts presented in the Book of Mormon and is verified by modern revelation. Following his resurrection Jesus Christ came to America and taught

⁸⁵P. De Roo, *History of America before Columbus* (Philadelphia, 1900), vol. 1, p. 111.

⁸⁶F. Martin Brown, *America's Yesterday* (Philadelphia, 1937), p. 120.

his gospel to the people. Dr. De Roo had been discussing the Mayas of Central America and Yucatán, the various Indian tribes of Mexico, and even the Delawares in eastern United States at the time Europeans had their first contact with them, and then he concluded:

That these Indians, and probably several more congenial tribes, were Christians, in the broad sense of the word, at the time of their landing on American soil, can scarcely be doubted. They knew and worshipped the one eternal, spiritual, and ubiquitous God, who "caused" or created the heavens and the earth and all they contain; they knew of the happiness of our first parents eating the "fat fruit" of Eden, and of the "bad spirit" who brought them to sin, misfortune, and death; and, as they were acquainted with the circumstances of the dire tragedy, we may readily infer that they were not altogether ignorant of its most important particular: the promise of a Redeemer, which constitutes the deepest foundation of Christianity.⁸⁷

We trust that no intelligent reader would contradict us, if we should consider it sufficiently demonstrated that the Christian religion was preached in America during the first centuries of our era.⁸⁸

Dr. P. De Roo's conclusions are completely in harmony with the revelations from the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith. In 1830 Jesus Christ declared that

. . . the Book of Mormon . . . contains the truth and the word of God—which is my word to the Gentile, that soon it may go to the Jew, of whom the Lamanites [Indians] are a remnant, that they may believe in the gospel, and look not for a Messiah to come who has already come.⁸⁹

In April, 1830, Joseph Smith received another revelation in which the Lord declared that ". . . the Book of Mormon contains the record of a fallen people, and the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. . . ."⁹⁰ In August of that same year, while revealing other information to the Prophet, Jesus mentioned ". . . Moroni, whom I have sent unto you to reveal the Book of Mormon, containing the fulness of my everlasting gospel, . . ."⁹¹

Soon after his resurrection, the Son of Man spent a number of days teaching the ancient Americans the gospel of Jesus Christ, as he had done in Palestine prior to his crucifixion. He had established his Church, appointed twelve disciples to preside over it, and had ascended to heaven. The disciples fasted and prayed, and in re-

⁸⁷De Roo, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 111-112.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 582.

⁸⁹D. & C. 19:26-27.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 20:8-9.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 27:5; 42:12.

sponse Jesus appeared unto them. He asked them what they desired. They replied that they wanted to know what name to call the Church which Christ had established.

And the Lord said unto them: Verily, verily, I say unto you, . . . Have ye not read the scriptures, which say ye must take upon you the name of Christ, which is my name? For by this name shall ye be called at the last day; And whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day

Therefore, whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name; and ye shall call upon the Father in my name that he will bless the church for my sake.

And how be it my church save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses' name then it be Moses' church; or if it be called in the name of a man then it be the church of a man; *but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel.*⁹²

And then Jesus Christ explained the meaning of his gospel which he had given to the Nephites. To quote part of his explanation:

Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—

And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works.

And it shall come to pass that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.

And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father.

And this is the word which he hath given unto the children of men. And for this cause he fulfilleth the words which he hath given, and he lieth not, but fulfilleth all his words.

And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

⁹²3 Nephi 27:4-8. Italics supplied by the writer.

Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do;

Therefore, if ye do these things blessed are ye, for ye shall be lifted up at the last day.⁹³



The bearded Maya warrior killing a captive. This carving is under-surface of west door lintel, "Temple of Painted Walls," Bonampak, Mexico. Observe the Hebraic-like appearance of his profile and beard. The headdress of Quetzal feathers indicates that he was a worshiper of Quetzalcoatl.

—*Photograph by Author*

Fig. 22: HEBRAIC-LIKE MAN, BONAMPAC, MEXICO

THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY GHOST

A number of Book of Mormon evidences from archaeology, from Indian historians of the sixteenth century, from Indian traditions, and from the writings of the Catholic missionaries of the sixteenth century, have been given in this chapter. They all corroborate the claims made by the ancient Nephite records; however, the greatest of all witnesses to the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon is the witness borne to one's heart by the Holy Ghost. In closing the story of his people, Moroni gave a vital admonition to the human

⁹³*Ibid.*, 13-22.

family and a scientific formula which could be applied effectively if we desire to gain a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. Moroni wrote:

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.⁹⁴

Thousands of Latter-day Saints have put that admonition and promise to the test and know as they know that they are alive that the Book of Mormon is true. Also, many others who were not church members have read the Book of Mormon with a sincere and prayerful heart, having faith in Christ, and a strong desire to know whether or not the claims made by Joseph Smith and the teachings and contents of the Book of Mormon are true. They have asked the Eternal Father in the name of Christ for a testimony, and through the power of the Holy Ghost the truthfulness of that book was manifest unto them. The Holy Ghost penetrated their souls and bore a sweet witness to them of the divine authenticity of that ancient record. Then they knew with as much assurance as they had of any fact which they had ever learned that the Book of Mormon is true, divinely inspired, and a sacred historical and religious account of the inhabitants of ancient America. Only those who have had the Holy Ghost bear witness to their hearts can fully understand and appreciate what I have endeavored to explain.

I encourage every honest man and woman throughout the entire world to put Moroni's admonition and promise to the test; and I believe with all my heart that each one who does with honest intentions, having a sincere desire to know the truth, and having implicit faith in Jesus Christ, will receive through the power of the Holy Ghost a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon.

With the evidences in mind presented in the preceding chapters, we shall resume the story of our tours of Meso-America, which was introduced in chapter one.

⁹⁴Moroni 10:4.

CHAPTER 5

TOURING BOOK OF MORMON LANDS

A TOUR OF ANCIENT AMERICA

The members of the touring party decided to name officially our proposed trip to Mexico and Central America "A Tour of Ancient America and Book of Mormon Lands." In selecting this name, we had no thought in mind that Mexico (including Yucatán), Guatemala, and Honduras, constituted the only places where Jaredites, Nephites, and Lamanites had lived in ancient times. But since we felt that some of the Book of Mormon peoples and their descendants had resided in that part of the country and since archaeological evidences are so abundant there, we gave our tour the foregoing title.

The personnel of the touring party were: President Alex F. and Carol Dunn; Dr. Rex D. and Helen Stutznegger; Herman and Fawn Pedersen; Elmer and Florence Elkington; Moroni H. and Rebecca Ostler—all of Tooele, Utah; President Leland W. and Alice Redd, Blanding, Utah; President Vernal W. and Estella Johns, Garland, Utah; Dr. Henry Ray and Mary L. Hatch, Idaho Falls; M. Ward and Inez Moody, Delta, Utah; Louis and Geraldine Callister, and the writer, all of Salt Lake City.

FLIGHT TO GUATEMALA

In accordance with pre-arranged plans, the twenty-one members of our touring party assembled in Los Angeles on December 16, 1954. Upon arriving we were informed by the Pan American lines that the plane, which was scheduled to leave Los Angeles for Guatemala City at 11:30 p.m., was several hours late. It did not leave until seven o'clock the following morning.

The delay in the flight, however, proved to be advantageous to the party members. Instead of flying from Los Angeles to Guatemala City during the nighttime, in accordance with the regularly planned schedule, we enjoyed all of the flight in the daylight. This gave us the advantage of a good perspective of all of the country en route to Guatemala City, since the plane flew relatively low and was over land, rather than water, most of the time. A second ad-



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 23: MEMBERS OF TOURING PARTY

Members of our touring party with President and Sister Bowman in front of the L.D.S. meetinghouse in Mexico City. Kneeling left to right: Elmer Elkington, Dr. Rex D. Stutznegger, Estella Johns, M. Ward Moody, Leland W. Redd, Vernal W. Johns. Standing left to right: Dr. Henry R. Hatch, Rebecca Ostler, Moroni H. Ostler, Mary L. Hatch, Florence Elkington, Helen Stutznegger, Inez Moody, Alice Redd, Fawn Pederson, Herman Pederson, Carol Dunn, Geraldine Callister, Alex F. Dunn, Louis Callister, Milton R. Hunter, Jennie Bowman, and Claudious Bowman.

vantage was that we had several hours while on the plane in which to discuss the various archaeological ruins which we were planning to visit. This furnished an excellent opportunity for the party members to become aware of many important factors to be observed which constitute valid Book of Mormon evidences. It also gave us an opportunity to attain a fuller understanding of the archaeological sites themselves, their histories, and the peoples who had inhabited them. We were thereby better prepared when we arrived and could receive greater benefit through our tour of Book of Mormon lands.

ARRIVAL AT GUATEMALA CITY

As we got out of the plane at the Guatemala airport, having flown approximately twelve hours and traveled nearly 2,400 miles from Los Angeles to Guatemala City, we were thrilled to see among the crowd of Guatemalans President and Sister Gordon Romney of the Central American Mission and several of the elders. We were greeted with the typical cordial missionary handshake.

Since the most recent and noteworthy achievement of the Central American Mission had been the erection in Guatemala City of a beautiful church building and a new mission home with mission offices adjacent to it, as soon as we cleared customs President Romney took the members of the touring party to see these buildings. This was done even before the Clark Touring Agency took us to our hotel. As we inspected the new mission headquarters—which are very attractive and should meet the present needs of the mission—President Romney informed us that Elder LeGrand Richards, who was scheduled to arrive in two or three days to tour the Central American Mission, would dedicate those buildings the following Sunday in connection with the Guatemala District conference.

SAN BLAS INDIANS DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM AND JACOB

That evening while the majority of the touring party members visited places of interest in Guatemala City, Brother and Sister Johns and I spent the evening in the mission home discussing with President and Sister Romney and some of the missionaries the traditions and beliefs of the Indians who lived within the confines of the Central American Mission. President Romney told us about his many thrilling experiences while working among the various Indian tribes of Central America. He explained that recently he had visited a group of San Blas Indians who live on an island off the coast of Panama not far from the Pacific entrance to the Panama Canal. While he was holding a meeting with them, one of their chiefs arose to his feet, pounded himself on the chest with both fists, and then with pride said: "*We are the descendants of Abraham and Jacob. Back in the distant past our ancestors came from over the sea. We are Israelites—descendants from the house of Israel.*"

As the reader will recall, during the early years of the Spanish conquest, a similar claim was made by the Quiché and Cakchiquel

Mayas of Guatemala; for example, they wrote: “. . . *they [the ancestors of the Quiché Mayas] came from where the sun rises, descendants of Israel, of the same language and the same customs . . . they were the sons of Abraham and Jacob.*”¹

GUATEMALA

Guatemala, which lies immediately south and southeast of Mexico, is the northernmost country of the six which constitute Central America. It is a little larger than the state of New York. It is favored with an unusually good climate, with a mild temperature throughout the year. There are two seasons, the rainy season in our summer and the dry season during our winter months.

The population of Guatemala, as estimated on December 31, 1954, was 3,302,000. Of this number 53.6 per cent were claimed to be pure-blooded descendants of the several groups of the Maya race. The fullblood Indians live primarily throughout the higher regions, where they have preserved their ancient traditions and customs.

Guatemala has a wide variety of both flora and fauna. Because of the high mountain ranges, many plants which are natives of Mexico and more northern countries are found there. In the lowlands the vegetation is similar to that found in more southern regions, especially that of the northern parts of South America and

¹*Title of the Lords of Totonicapán*, pp. 19-170; *Popol Vuh*, p. 23; *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*, p. 43.

Fig. 24: HEBRAIC-LIKE QUICHE MAYA MEN

Quiché Maya Indians from Chichicastenango, Guatemala. Observe their Hebraic appearance.

—Photographs by Author



the West Indies. Tourists are “. . . delighted with the profusion of exotic fruits and flowers, ranging from the tropical brilliance of orchids and bougainvillea to the delicately scented roses and jasmine beloved of more northern climes.” The national flower is the *Nonja Blanca* (White Nun), a delicate white orchid which grows only in Guatemala. The quetzal, a brilliantly-plumed, long-tailed bird which will not live in captivity, was highly revered by the ancient Mayas, and today it is Guatemala’s national emblem, signifying love of liberty.

The Guatemalan highlands offer her most spectacular scenery. The towering, pine-clad mountains, many of them volcanoes, shelter deep valleys, gorges, and lakes. Miles and miles of tropical jungles lie in northern and eastern Guatemala. Since it was in the northern and eastern portions of that country, as well as in Honduras and southern Mexico, that the marvelous ancient Maya civilizations flourished, one of the world’s most extensive and important archaeological areas lies in these regions.

TOURING GUATEMALA CITY

Guatemala City is built on a mile high plateau, situated two hundred miles from the Carribean Sea and seventy-five miles from the Pacific Ocean. It was established in 1776, the year of the American War of Independence. This city has a charm which is a combination of old and new. Its narrow streets, laid out when ox-cart and horse were the principal means of transportation, are quaint, clean, and interesting. Beautiful churches and mansions, some of colonial architecture and others modern, stand side by side; and the city is well supplied with modern stores and theaters. There are a number of public squares and well-tended gardens, the largest of which, *Parque Central*, forms the hub of the city. To the north of the Central Park or plaza, and facing it, stands the National Palace, the official seat of the government; and to the east is the city’s most attractive cathedral, the *Cathedral de la Ciudad de Guatemala* (Cathedral of Guatemala City).

The members of the touring party spent a full day visiting important places in Guatemala City. The National Palace was of unusual interest. Typical of Spanish American architecture, its arched cloistered walls surround courtyards with fountain-fed patios. Inside the building large murals depicting the country’s stormy his-

tory are on the walls of the spacious halls. Its magnificent reception rooms are paneled in hand-carved Guatemalan mahogany. They are beautiful.

Among the most interesting sites we visited was the Central Market, situated a block from the National Palace. Here we saw every type of native handicraft, practically all flowers, fruits, and vegetables, all kinds of meats and spices which could be found in Guatemala. Hundreds of Indians and Guatemalans do their purchasing and trading there, while tourists choose from the fascinating array of hand-woven textiles, leather goods, carved wood, and silverware.

Perhaps even more interesting to the members of our touring party than the Central Market was the one held daily in the streets toward the south end of the city. That market, which extended along the streets for three or four blocks, was typical of outdoor markets held in the various communities throughout Mexico and Central America. Numerous Indians brought their goods to sell or articles to exchange with each other. The Indian women, with large baskets filled with produce which they carry on their heads, come daily from the surrounding countryside to this Guatemalan market. The men also carry heavy loads on their heads and shoulders, sometimes more than their own individual weights.

In this open-air market in the streets of Guatemala, we saw real native life. The pride of the ancient inhabitants of that country was reflected in the present-day Indians, who maintained their ancient customs and languages and their gorgeously colored costumes. These they had woven on primitive handlooms perhaps as their ancestors in Book of Mormon days had done. The clothing of the Indians throughout all of Guatemala was the most colorful that the writer had ever seen in any other country. The people in their native attire were very attractive.

As we walked through the market and observed all these interesting things, our minds reverted back through the centuries to biblical days as we imagined them when Rachel, with her water jug on her head, met Abraham's servant at the village well. Or perhaps we thought of the time when Lehi's small colony left Jerusalem for the "Promised Land," leaving behind Hebrew maidens who were in the habit of congregating at the community well for the purpose of getting their daily water supply and at the same time keeping in-

formed on social news, customs which had prevailed for centuries in the countries where the Israelites lived. The feeling came over us that we had been transplanted to the Old World and back in time more than 2,500 years to the period of Lehi's departure into the wilderness from the Holy City where history tells us that colorful markets were held and people bargained and traded their goods one with another. We found that the ancient customs transported from Jerusalem by the Nephites had survived in Guatemala, as well as throughout Mexico and all of Central America.

Naturally the most interesting spot in Guatemala to me was the National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. Here are housed numerous valuable carved jade and stone objects and other relics of the ancient Mayas. The members of the touring party carefully observed everything in the museum, and Elder Toby Pingree assisted me in photographing the numerous artifacts which could be considered as Book of Mormon evidences.

VISITING ANTIGUA EN ROUTE TO CHICHICASTENANGO

Our touring party's principal purpose in going to Guatemala was to visit Chichicastenango (Chee-chee-cäss-tá-nän'gō), the headquarters of the Quiché Maya Indians, since I had concluded from my studies of the history, traditions, manners, and customs of the various Indian tribes of the Western Hemisphere that the Quichés were perhaps the most direct descendants of the Nephite-Lamanite peoples of all present-day Indians. I had been informed of the interesting religious ceremonies carried forward by those Indians on Sundays at Chichicastenango, and so we left Guatemala City Saturday morning on December 18 for that place.

Our first stop en route was at the unique and interesting town of Antigua (An-tee'-gwa), one of the principal tourist attractions in Guatemala. It is situated twenty-five miles southeast of Guatemala City. There we had the unusual experience of visiting the original permanent colonial capital of Central America, which during the eighteenth century was left in ruins by earthquakes and flood.

Don Pedro de Alvarado, the Spanish general, with his hardy *conquistadores*, ruthlessly took over Guatemala during the early part of the sixteenth century. These Spanish soldiers treacherously and heartlessly massacred thousands of the Quiché Mayas in 1524,



—*Photograph by Author*

Fig. 25: QUICHE MAYA CHIEF ENGRAVED IN IRON

The last Quiché Maya chief of Guatemala to be defeated by the invading Spaniards. Observe the Indian's beard, and also his headdress of Quetzal feathers and the beautiful quetzal bird perched on his hand. The Quetzal symbol of Quetzalcoatl indicates that the Quiché Mayas were still worshipers of the "White Bearded God" at the time of the Spanish conquest. For an explanation of the engraving of the Quiché chief, see footnote two, page 66.

completely defeated them, and took possession of Guatemala in the name of the king of Spain and of Christianity.²

Alvarado founded a capital city in 1524, which was transferred from site to site until finally in March, 1543, the city was established on the present site of Antigua. It was located on a beautiful spot at the foot of *Volcan de Agua* (Water Volcano) in the Panchoy Valley. It was named the Very Noble and Very Loyal City of Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala, but later it was called Antigua which means ancient.

When Antigua was the old colonial capital it had a population of 75,000 people. It reached such a state of progress and prosperity that it was one of the three principal American cities prior to its destruction, its two rivals being Mexico City and Lima, Peru. It counted among its possessions an up-to-date university, magnificent buildings and palaces, a fine residential district, churches and convents that were superb architectural jewels, and many works of art that bore witness to the great culture which the old romantic colonial city developed.

It enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity for 230 years, and then on July 29, 1773, a terrific earthquake reduced most of the city of Antigua to a heap of ruins. A spot in the Ermita Valley, the present site of Guatemala City, was then selected as the location for the capital city. It was founded in the year 1776 and given the name of Guatemala de la Asunción.

Antigua at the present time is a small city of 10,000 people; in fact, there are only 15,000 living in Cabecera County, and they live in seven different villages, including that of Antigua.

Although most of the Spanish colonial buildings in Antigua are partially in ruin, they have been carefully preserved. The thing which was awe-inspiring to all of us was the gigantic size of the colonial structures, which is evidenced by the parts of the buildings which remain today. Around the ancient colonial ruins, the modern

²The last Quiché Maya chief to be defeated by Alvarado is shown in the photograph with a quetzal bird perched on his hand. Shortly after the defeat of the Mayas, one of the Spanish *conquistadores* made this representation of the Quiché chief on a rectangular piece of iron approximately six inches in length. Jesus Carranza Juarez at Totonicapán, Guatemala, owns this important relic. While I was touring the Central American Mission in January, 1956, Mr. Juarez graciously permitted me to photograph it. He claimed that that was the first time this interesting relic had ever been photographed, and so this is the first time that it has ever been published.



—Photographs by Author

Fig. 26: MAYA INDIANS WEARING APRONS

Maya Indians from Patzun, Guatemala. Observe the aprons that the men are wearing.

city has been rebuilt entirely in old Spanish colonial style. Modern Antigua is composed of pastel-hued houses facing narrow cobbled streets, with its background the blue-green volcano—*Agua*. The atmosphere of bygone centuries has been maintained so well that our touring party members felt as if we were in another world—a calm and gracious world far removed from the bustle of modern life. This was an experience to be long remembered.

DRESS OF THE GUATEMALANS

As we continued our journey towards Chichicastenango, we passed through one Indian village after another. We soon observed that all the men in each village wore identical clothing, and each woman was dressed like all the other women in her particular village. We observed also that the clothing worn in one village was entirely different from that of other villages.

One of our guides, Henry Palicos, in whose car I was riding, explained that it was the custom for the Indians in a community to dress alike, their clothing being made out of cloth with texture, colors, and weave exactly identical throughout the entire community. The same custom prevails for the men as for women. Through being familiar with their clothing, he explained, the people who reside in Guatemala can easily tell exactly in which community the Indians live.

I was somewhat amazed and intensely interested when we came to a town named Patzun (Pät-zoon') to observe that all the men on the streets were wearing a certain type of unusual, peculiar apron. The women on the other hand did not wear such aprons. I called the guide's attention to it. He informed us that the aprons constitute a portion of those Indians' regular daily costume, all the men in that particular village and perhaps the entire tribe having worn that same identical type of apron for as long as he could remember. I suggested that on our way back from Chichicastenango I would like to take some photos of some of the men who were wearing those aprons.

The following day as we entered Patzun we stopped our car and asked two men who were wearing those aprons if we could take their pictures. They readily consented. After photographing them, I asked the two Indians, "Why do you wear those aprons?"

They replied, "It is a sacred custom of our people which has come down to us from the distant past. We wear them because of our traditions and customs."

A year later near the same town, I photographed a man and his wife. As the reader will observe, the man is wearing an apron. The photo of the figurine clothed with an apron was taken in Mérida, Yucatán. It is a pre-Columbian Itzá Maya figurine.

LAKE ATITLAN

The road to Chichicastenango led upward into the mountains. It was a dirt road with hundreds of chucks and plenty of dust; however, we were fully compensated by the splendor of the Guatemalan mountain scenery. No matter which direction one looked, he saw an abundance of vegetation—trees, shrubs, and flowers of numerous varieties. The country is kept green by the heavy rainfall, with an average precipitation of sixty-five inches per year. In 1947, however, the guide informed us that the rainfall reached ninety-seven inches. During that year the floods were so excessive that many of the roads were washed out; and some of them had not been brought into complete repair when we were there over seven years later.

As we came around a bend in the mountain road, there lying cool and silent 2,000 feet below us—nestled in a small valley, glittering in the sunshine—was perhaps the most beautiful mountain lake

Figurine wearing an apron. From private collection of Alberto G. Marquez of Merida, Yucatán.



—*Photograph by Otto Done*

Fig. 27: MAYA FIGURINE WEARING APRON

I have ever seen, Lake Atitlán (Ä-tee-tlän'). A rapturous thrill went through us. For sheer magnificence and beauty, I believe that Atitlán is surpassed by no other mountain body of water. A feature which makes it so spectacular is the fact that it is surrounded by four or five majestic volcanoes, each cone-shaped and extending to a peak high up in the blue heavens. The entire panorama was awe-inspiring. Guatemala possesses some of the most spectacular scenery found anywhere. Those of our party who had previously



A Quiché Maya young man at Chichicastenango, Guatemala, dressed in a typical Quiché costume. One of our bellboys. Observe the whiteness of his skin.

Fig. 28: WHITE QUICHE YOUNG MAN, CHICHICASTENANGO

enjoyed the splendor of the Swiss Alps claimed that the scenery of Guatemala, especially around Lake Atitlán, equals the majesty and beauty of the Alps.

QUICHE MAYAS AND CHICHICASTENANGO

After relaxing for an hour at Atitlán, we continued our journey to Chichicastenango, an Indian village which lies high in the mountains northward from Atitlán. "Chichi" (Chee-chee), as it is oft-times affectionately called, is a quaint, small Indian village which has served as a religious and social center for the Quiché Mayas since the time of the Spanish conquest.

We arrived at Chichicastenango shortly before dark. Lodging had been arranged for us at the Maya Inn, an interesting and unusual hotel. The inn was constructed in rambling style, somewhat similar

to auto courts in the United States. Four or five Quiché Maya young men, perhaps in their early twenties, served as our bellboys. We asked them for keys to our rooms. They looked somewhat surprised, and then one of them replied: "Nobody ever steals anything here, and no one in Chichicastenango ever locks his doors; in fact, we do not even have keys nor locks." Our experience verified his statement.

The Mayas are intelligent and industrious people, having a higher culture than that of many other tribes of American Indians. It is true that their educational opportunities have been meager; however, their native intelligence is apparent to anyone who will take time to observe them. They are a good-looking, deeply religious, gentle, and appealing people.

It is claimed that the Quichés have retained the purity of their blood strain, perhaps as much so as any other tribe of Indians. Like their ancient Hebrew ancestors, the parents arrange the marriages for their children.³ Archaeologists claim that from the earliest times the Mayas have been adverse to marrying peoples who do not belong to their race.

Following the discovery of America, the Quichés vigorously opposed marrying Spanish *conquistadores* and members of successive groups of European colonists. They have held tenaciously to a traditional custom practiced by the ancient Israelites and brought to America by the Nephites who I believe were among their forebears. This custom was based on a belief that people of Israelite stock are God's chosen people and must keep their racial stock pure. While the Nephites were living the gospel of Jesus Christ during Book of Mormon days, this chosen people doctrine was a safeguard against their marrying Lamanites. After the last great war, the surviving Nephites, however, mixed with the Lamanites; but it seems that the chosen people doctrine survived and was handed down through their pagan posterity, the Quiché Mayas. It has resulted in this people maintaining themselves through successive generations as a more or less pureblood Indian race, perhaps maintaining themselves as direct descendants of Nephite-Lamanite peoples more purely than have any other tribe of the American Indians.

³J. Eric S. Thompson, *The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization*, pp. 210-217.

If the foregoing claims are correct—and many people who have made careful studies of the Mayas maintain that they are—our touring party members concluded that we might expect to find that the Indians at Chichicastenango had certain beliefs, customs, and traditions which could connect the Quichés with the Jews. We wondered if any of the Indians would have any resemblances in appearance to the ancient Hebrews. Since our principal interest in going to Chichicastenango was to study the Quiché Mayas, we spent our time observing whether or not the Indians possessed Jewish characteristics. All the members of our party were of the opinion that they did. In social customs, as well as in appearance, they reminded us of the Jews; in fact, we selected Indian after Indian of both sexes who we thought were definitely Hebraic-like in appearance and photographed them

RELIGION OF THE QUICHE MAYAS

Toward the close of the Book of Mormon period and thereafter, the ancient American progenitors of the Quiché Mayas polluted the true gospel which their forefathers had had. They paganized their religion by instituting a multitude of religious forms and ceremonies which were contrary to those which had been taught by the “White Bearded God,” or Jesus Christ, when he visited their ancestors. The most horrible of these innovations was human sacrifice. They adopted this wicked practice just before the close of Book of Mormon history. Mormon wrote on the sacred records: “And they [the Lamanites] did march forward against the city of Teancum, . . . and did take many prisoners, both women and children, and did offer them up as sacrifices unto their idol gods.”⁴ This wicked practice was engaged in continuously down to the Spanish conquest by many of the Indian tribes, including the Mayas.

When the Spaniards conquered the Quichés of Guatemala in 1524, the Catholic padres were very anxious to make Christians of the pagan natives, and so they moved the headquarters of the Quichés from Quezaltenango (Kez'-ál-ta-nän'-gō) to Chichicastenango, erected a large church building for them called Santo Tomás Cathedral, and placed a Spanish priest there. The Santo Tomás Cathedral stands on the east end of the public plaza facing west. The Indians erected for themselves a church building facing east

⁴Mormon 4: 14-15, 21.

on the other end of the plaza; and also on top of a hill adjacent to the village they erected a pagan idol. It seems that these devoutly religious Indians felt that by attending mass in the Catholic Church at 8 a.m. on Sundays, followed by Indian pagan ceremonies in the same building, as well as in their own church building, and then climbing to the top of the hill to offer sincere oblations to their pagan idol, they would be positively assured of contact with the heavens.

Over four hundred years have elapsed since the Spanish conquest, and the Quiché Mayas are still pagans. The Catholic priests, failing in their efforts to do away with the numerous pagan practices and beliefs, tolerated them, and merely added as much Catholicism to the Indians' religion as they conveniently could. Therefore the religion of the Quiché Mayas today is a conglomeration, composed of adulterated forms of the original truths from Book of Mormon

Fig. 29: HEBRAIC-LIKE QUICHE MAYA MEN

Quiché Maya Indians from Chichicastenango, Guatemala. Observe the Hebraic-like appearance of the men.

—Photographs by Author





—Photograph by Author

Fig. 30: SANTO TOMÁS CATHEDRAL AND QUICHE WORSHIPERS
Santo Tomás Cathedral at Chichicastenango, Guatemala, and the Quiché Mayas worshipping and marketing.

days with an additional multitude of pagan beliefs and practices, and the portion of Catholicism which the Spanish *padres* succeeded in grafting thereon.

QUICHE MAYAS WORSHIPPING

Our touring party had purposely arranged to be in Chichicastenango on Sunday so we could observe the Quichés as they worshiped and carried on their marketing. Our fortune was unusually good. We found that the Indians were in the midst of their most important religious festival, which was held annually in honor of

their patron Saint, Santo Tomás. This religious festival had been in progress for several days. The Indians feel toward the Santo Tomás Festival somewhat as Latter-day Saints do toward April and October conferences, and so this was no ordinary Sunday that we were at Chichicastenango. However, their religious ceremonies are carried on in a similar way Sunday after Sunday.

In addition to the thousands who had gathered in town from the surrounding country for the religious festival, early Sunday morning witnessed hundreds more of the Quiché Mayas, clad in their picturesque black and red wool costumes, trooping into town from miles around, with their wares, consisting of such items as herds of squealing little black and white pigs, strutting turkeys, scrawny chickens, meats, fruits, pottery, and textiles. They had come to town to trade and to worship. While some of the Indians carried on their marketing, others went to the old church of Santo Tomás. There they clustered on the semi-circular steps, building fires, swinging copal incense burners, and chanting prayers for hour after hour. Indian priests kept a sacred fire burning near the bottom of the cathedral steps throughout the entire day. Other Quiché priests continued to swing their copal incense burners from early morning until the day ended, while they chanted long prayers. The smoke rising from the burning incense, so they believed, carried their prayers to heaven.

Some of our party members attended the eight o'clock mass which the Catholic priest held for the Indians in the Santo Tomás Cathedral. After the Catholic *padre* completed his services and departed from the room, the Indians, under the direction of their own "high priests," held their religious services. They also held similar services in their own church building.

Beginning at the front door and extending the entire length of the Santo Tomás Cathedral down to the altar, the Indian worshippers reverently placed on the floor numerous ears of corn, surrounded by rose petals of several different colors, green-leaved twigs, fruits, and lighted candles. These they placed in various patterns around which they knelt in family groups and offered lengthy prayers. We were informed that they were calling upon their divine Creator for blessings on their crops, their families, and their homes. Their petitions were sincere and reverent pleas to God for a bounteous harvest the coming year, for the immediate blessings of good



—Photograph by Elder Toby Pingree

Fig. 31: QUICHE INDIANS' MEETINGHOUSE

Quiché Maya church building at Chichicastenango, Guatemala. Indian market in foreground.

health and strength, for protection from harm and evil of all kinds, for blessings in childbirth, and for the gifts of peace, love, and general prosperity.

We had employed a Quiché guide named Sebastian, a young man who—in addition to his native tongue—spoke Spanish and English fluently. He explained that the majority of the Indians hired professional priests to do the praying for them, since they didn't understand the proper incantations and religious formulas requisite to obtain the desired blessings.

I asked Sebastian, "What is the purpose of all of those rose petals that the Indians have carefully spread on the floor?"

He replied that each rose of a different color represented a particular symbol to the Indians; for example, the white petals symbolized the continuance of peace which the natives so greatly desired. Other colors symbolized such things as love, good health, prosperity, and protection in childbirth. These rose petals assisted the prayers in reaching God and the devotees in obtaining their desired blessings.

I then asked, "What is the purpose of so many ears of corn being placed on the floor surrounded by rose leaves and lighted candles?"

He replied, "The priests bless the corn before it is planted, thereby assuring a bounteous harvest."

"Do you think it does any good for your people to pray over their corn before it is planted and implore the heavens for all the other things that you have mentioned?" I inquired.

He unhesitatingly responded, "Oh, yes, I certainly think it does. If my people failed to bring their corn to the church and pray for it on several Sundays before they planted it, the winds and storms would break it down, and they would harvest no crops." With faith of that kind, who would say that God, the Father of the human family, would not hear and answer the prayers of these simple, illiterate, misguided pagan Indians?

Although I recognized the fact that the religion of the Quichés was very pagan, greatly adulterated since Nephite days, I also observed that those people were intensely religious and sincere in their worship, as their ancestors had been. As I saw them praying over their corn before planting it, I recalled that Amulek, one of their ancestors in Book of Mormon days, had carefully instructed his people to pray over their crops. He told them to pray to God with an abundance of faith, and he would bless their crops. To quote from Amulek's sermon:

Therefore may God grant unto you, . . . that you begin to call upon his holy name, . . .

Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him.

Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks.

Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening. . . .



Fig. 32: PAGAN IDOL AND QUICHE WORSHIPERS

Quiché Maya Indians worshiping pagan idol on top of high hill near Chichicastenango, Guatemala.

Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them.

Cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase. . . .⁵

Another thing I observed while the Indians were worshiping was the large number of candles that some of them were burning. Some groups of lighted candles numbered as many as thirty-five. I asked, "What is the purpose of the lighted candles in the Indian religious worship?"

Sebastian replied, "Each member of a family is represented by a separate candle."

"Do the Indians have as many as thirty-five members in one family?" I inquired.

He explained, "Oh, yes, many families are that large. You see, a family consists of the great-grandparents if they still live, the grandparents, the parents, and all of their posterity." Once again

⁵Alma 34:17-22, 25.



—Photograph by Author

Fig. 33: QUICHE WORSHIPERS ON STEPS OF SANTO TOMAS CATHEDRAL
Quiché Maya Indians burning copal incense as they worship on the steps
of Santo Tomás Cathedral at Chichicastenango, Guatemala.

my mind reverted back to biblical days when an ancient Hebrew patriarchal family included the entire clan. Could it be that such an idea had come down through the Nephites and Lamanites and continued on through their posterity to the twentieth-century Quiché Mayas at Chichicastenango?

Perhaps the principal event at Chichicastenango during the Santo Tomás festival was the presentation in a pageant dance of the story of the Spanish conquest of Guatemala. Several months prior to holding the festival, Quiché men were selected to represent various Spanish historical characters and take certain parts in the pageant. They were thoroughly trained in every detail. At the pageant they were dressed in gaily colored costumes, including bearded masks, representing the armor and complete attire of the Spanish *conquistadores*. The marimba supplied background music for several hours. The whole affair was a very impressive spectacle.

Finally Sunday drew to a close, and the members of our touring party left Chichicastenango for Guatemala City. As we traveled over many miles of the dusty highway, our thoughts remained at "Chichi," meditating on one of the most colorful, unusual, and intensely interesting experiences that we had ever had. It was unique. I doubt that anyone who has seen this festival, smelled the air perfumed with flowers and incense, and heard the soft marimba music, will ever forget his trip to Chichicastenango.

VISITING CHICHEN ITZA

Monday the members of the touring party boarded the plane at Guatemala City and flew to Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico. The flight took only two hours. We were met at the airport by representatives of the travel agency and taken to the famous archaeological site of Chichén Itzá, which lies approximately seventy miles southeast of the capital of Yucatán. During the following two days, we stayed at the Mayaland Inn at Chichén Itzá while visiting archaeological ruins.

The Mayaland Inn is a most interesting and unusual place. The principal hotel contains a dining room, recreation room, curio shop, and a number of bedrooms, with a beautiful flower garden and patio north of the building, and to the east a swimming pool. In addition to the principal hotel, there are a dozen or more thatched-roofed cottages which are unusually attractive. Most of our party members stayed in the cottages. For sheer beauty in landscaping and peacefulness in atmosphere, it would be difficult to find a place to stay equal to the Mayaland Inn.

In the evenings we were entertained by three couples of Itzá Maya dancers. Those Indians, especially the women, had white



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 34: MAYALAND INN, CHICHEN ITZA, YUCATAN

was in typical Yucatan Indian costumes dancing on patio near swimming pool back of Mayaland Inn at Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico. One of several thatched cottages in which tourists stay.

skin, and they were very attractive people. As a result of carrying objects on their heads from childhood up, the women had such perfect posture that they danced vigorously with full glasses of water on their heads without spilling a drop.

Since we were at Chichen Itza a few days before Christmas, each evening the employees at the Mayaland Inn participated in a pageant depicting the birth of Jesus and a ceremonial procession.



Fig. 35: SACRED WELL OR CENOTE, CHICHEN ITZA

—*Photograph by Otto Done*

Two white Maya women standing near edge of the Sacred Well or *Cenote* at Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, Mexico.

Early the first morning after arriving at Chichén Itzá, our guides took us to see the archaeological ruins. First, we visited the North Zone where the spectacular Temple of Kukulcan stands. The majority of the party members climbed to its summit. From this vantage point we had a good view of Chichén Itzá. To the east stood the spectacular Temple of the Warriors and the Thousand Columns.

The market was situated to the south of where we stood; and to the north was an unusual archaeological structure called the Temple of the Tigers. It constituted one of the grandstands of the famous Ball Court.

We were standing on the top platform of the Temple of Kukulcan when our guide pointed along a trail which led perhaps a quarter of a mile into the jungles and explained: "At the end of that trail lies the Sacred Well, fed by an underground stream of water. It is called a *Cenote*. In addition to worshiping Quetzalcoatl, the ancient inhabitants of this city worshiped rain gods called Chacs. The Itzás were an agricultural people who depended upon rain to cause their corn to grow. In order to win and retain the favor of their rain gods, about the first of May each spring a religious festival was held here at Chichén Itzá. The chief priest, bedecked in long quetzal feathers (symbol of Quetzalcoatl) and wearing his priestly robes, accompanied by several beautiful maidens who had been selected months earlier, and followed by a score or more of other priests, descended the steep steps of this massive temple. The procession went past the two platforms, called the Temple of the Eagles and the Tomb of the Chacmool, which you see standing beside the trail. Dancers were performing on top of those temples as part of the religious festival. The procession continued along the trail to the Sacred Well."

Then he said, "We will now go down the steps, as the ancient worshipers of Chichén Itzá did, and along the trail to the *Cenote*. When we arrive I'll finish my story."

When the members of our touring party reached the brink of the Sacred Well and were gazing down its sixty-five feet of perpendicular banks to its greenish waters, our guide, standing on an eminence or platform, continued: "The high priest brought the beautiful maidens to this point, and one by one he hurled them downward into the brackish waters of this well. He and the worshipers returned to this spot at noontime. If they could see any of the girls alive, they pulled them out of the well. If the girls reported that they had visited their ancestors down in the waters of the well and that their ancestors had said that the people would have bounteous crops, the girls were permitted to live. If an unfavorable report was given, the girls were thrown once again into the well and left there to perish."



Fig. 36: CHICHEN ITZA BALL COURT

—Photograph by Otto Done

Ball Court at Chichén Itzá. Temple of Tigers at extreme right of photograph with east wall of Ball Court and hoop through which players knocked ball. Temple of Bearded Man at far end. Observe the serpent decoration on buildings, symbol of Quetzalcoatl.

“How terrible!” gasped some of our party members.

Our guide replied, “To the ancient Mayas, it was not terrible. The girls were offered as human sacrifices to their god. He must be appeased, or the community would perish, so they believed; and so the girls who were chosen for the sacrifices were daughters of royalty. They were of noble birth, the choicest offerings that the people were capable of giving. It was considered an honor to be chosen to be sacrificed in the Sacred Well.”

We next visited the Ball Court. Our guide demonstrated the astounding acoustic qualities of this structure by standing midway between the two outer walls. As he spoke, we could distinctly count several echoes.

Pointing to some carvings on the walls depicting the ancient ball game, the guide explained, "As part of the religious festival held for the purpose of securing the favor of their rain gods, and the gods of fertility, two highly trained and efficient ball teams played a game in this Ball Court. They used a large rubber ball, which they knocked with their hips, knees, or some other part of their bodies, without touching it with their hands. The captain of the team which first successfully knocked the ball through the hole in the stone ring, which you see attached to the wall of the Ball Court, cut the head off the captain of the losing team. The rain god must be appeased with a blood sacrifice so he would send rain to water the corn."

Again the response came, "How horrible! And this all took place in the name of religion."

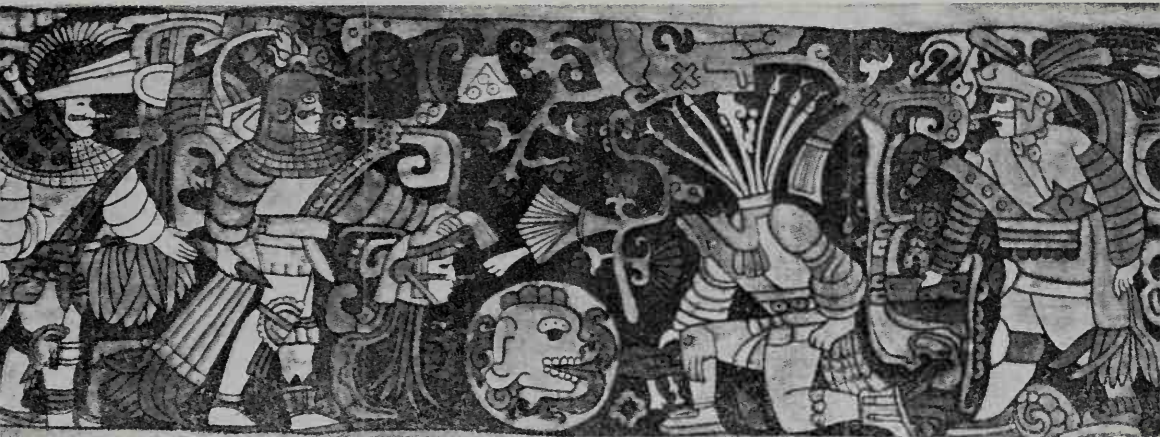


Fig. 37: RELIEF CARVING DEPICTING EXECUTION, CHICHEN ITZA BALL COURT

platforms which run along the east and west walls of the Ball Court are ornamented with relief carvings. A frieze with a death-like face toward which men are facing is in the center of the scene. The captain of the losing ball team, kneeling on the ground, has been decapitated by the captain of the winning team who is holding the severed head. From the neck of the victim, as well as from the severed head, blood gushes forth in the form of serpents. The two other men on the scene are holding serpents in their hands, and all of them are elaborately decorated with quetzal feathers.

We visited the grandstand at the north end of the Ball Court which is called the "Temple of the Bearded Man." There we observed and photographed the carving of the bearded man which writers have claimed to be an excellent Hebraic representation.

In the Middle Zone of Chichén Itzá, the members of our touring party examined with intense interest the Tomb of the High Priest,

the House of the Three Brothers, the Nunnery, the Church, the Observatory, and especially the Temple of the Plaques which contains the Chichén Itzá horse. All of us were pleased to find that the Maya carving depicting a horse was still there.

MAYAS' INTELLECTUAL ACHIEVEMENTS

As we approached the *Caracol* or astronomical observatory, our guide explained: "Perhaps there is no archaeological structure at Chichén Itzá which was of greater importance to its ancient inhabitants than was this one. In this building the priest-astronomers studied the heavenly bodies. They were outstanding scientists, attaining a knowledge which would have been the envy of any people in the world in their day. Perhaps their knowledge of astronomy was more complete and comprehensive than that of any race of antiquity."

The Maya priest-astrologers

. . . plotted the courses of the planets, including dim and elusive Mercury. So accurate were the measurements of those ancient Maya astronomers, that they differ only slightly in degrees and minutes from those of our present-day astronomers aided by powerful telescopes and advanced mathematical formulas. They were fully aware of a $365\frac{1}{4}$ day year, and developed a calendar of an eighteen-month year of twenty days each, plus a five-day week at the end of each year. To take care of the remaining one-fourth day, they made corrections for leap year at convenient intervals. This they computed and put into daily practice long before the Julian calendar was adopted in Rome and, in consequence, centuries before Pope Gregory XIII called for a conference in 1582 when our present day calendar was created.

The old Mayan astronomers didn't stop with their observations of the movements of the sun, the moon, and the five known planets, but compiled tables of lunar eclipses and predicted these with astounding accuracy.⁷

In his most recent book, *The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization*, Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson discussed at considerable length the astronomical knowledge attained by the Mayas. He declared that it was a great intellectual achievement for the Maya priest-astronomers to construct a table for predicting when solar eclipses would be visible.⁸ He, like most writers, gives the Mayas full credit for the complete development of all their astronomical knowledge; however, it may be possible that they inherited many ideas from their ancestors—the ancient Israelites.

⁷*Yucatán—The Land of the Maya* (Mexico D. F., 1953), pp. 12-13.

⁸Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 148.



Fig. 38: CARACOL OR OBSERVATORY AT CHICHEN ITZA, YUCATAN, MEXICO

The ancient Hebrew prophets attained a profound knowledge of the stars and planets by direct revelation from heaven; for example, the Lord appeared to Abraham and gave him power to look into space as if he were using a modern telescope. The Lord

showed Abraham a marvelous vision of the numerous works he had created and explained the various heavenly bodies at which Abraham was looking. The ancient prophet wrote: "I saw the stars that they were very great . . . and they multiplied before mine eyes, and I could not see the end thereof."⁹ The Lord explained to the ancient patriarch the times, seasons, and the laws which govern the solar systems. The knowledge of astronomy received by Father Abraham and recorded for his posterity is in complete agreement with modern astronomical science.¹⁰

Moses also received revelations from the Lord regarding astronomy and a vision of the heavenly bodies—God's creations—similar to those received by Abraham.¹¹

In their scriptures these ancient Hebrew patriarchs handed down their knowledge of astronomy to their posterity. The Nephites brought the Hebrew scriptures with them from the Holy City to the New World; and so one is not surprised to find such statements in the Book of Mormon as the following: ". . . and it appeareth unto man that the sun standeth still; yea, and behold, this is so; for surely it is the earth that moveth and not the sun."¹² Perhaps the basic ideas on astronomy which the Nephites had were handed down to the Mayas.

Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson gives an elaborate discussion on the Maya philosophy of time. In it he states:

So far as this general outlook on life is concerned, the great men of Athens would not have felt out of place in the gathering of Maya priests and rulers, but had the conversation turned on the subject of the philosophical aspects of time, the Athenians—or, for that matter, representatives of any of the great civilizations of history—would have been at sea. No other people in history has taken such an absorbing interest in time as did the Maya, and no other culture has ever developed a philosophy embracing such an unusual subject. . . .

For the Maya time was an all-consuming interest. Every stela and altar was erected to mark the passage of time and was dedicated at the end of a period.¹³

A little later in his book Dr. Thompson wrote:

⁹Abraham 3:1-18.

¹⁰Milton R. Hunter, *Pearl of Great Price Commentary* (Salt Lake City, 1948), pp. 87-98.

¹¹Moses 1:31-38.

¹²Helaman 12:15.

¹³Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 137

. . . the Maya idea of the eternity of time was noble. In the Maya scheme the road over which time had marched stretched into a path so distant that the mind of men cannot comprehend its remoteness . . . indeed, we can feel rather confident that the Maya concluded that time had no beginning.¹⁴

It is not surprising that the ancient Mayas considered time to be eternal, since that fact was revealed to one of their ancestors, Father Abraham. The ancient patriarch was also told by the Lord that space and matter have no beginning and no end; in other words, they are all eternal.¹⁵

BAPTISM PRACTICED BY THE AMERICAN INDIANS

After we had completed our observation of the famous Maya astronomical observatory, our guide took us a few yards southwest of the observatory and, pointing to a cistern-like structure in the earth, said: "This is an ancient Maya baptismal font. It appears that the Mayas practiced baptism by immersion in it."

As the reader will see in the photograph, a Maya girl is standing in this cistern-like structure, which is circular in form. The top of it comes to her shoulders. It has steps leading down one side to the bottom. The bottom and the sides are made of rock which have been securely cemented together. There is a round hole about five inches in diameter on each side of this cistern-like structure which could have carried fresh water in and emptied water out, to keep the water fresh if it had been used as a baptismal font. The holes are perhaps four feet from the bottom of this cistern, or baptismal font, or whatever it may be.

One of our party members remarked, "This may have been the queen's bath."

Our guide replied, "It would be quite a public place for her to be taking her bath."

When Jesus Christ appeared to the inhabitants of ancient America, he taught them the gospel and instructed them how to baptize by immersion. Christ selected twelve men and gave them the priesthood. He authorized them to baptize the people, and gave them the following definite instructions regarding baptism:

. . . On this wise shall ye baptize; and there shall be no disputations among you.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 140.

¹⁵Abraham 3:11-12.



—Photograph by Otto Don

Fig. 39: YUCATAN WOMEN AND CISTERN-LIKE STRUCTURE, CHICHEN ITZA

Yucatán woman standing in the cistern-like structure at Chichén Itzá which the guide claimed was a baptismal

Verily I say unto you, that whoso repenteth of his sins through your words and desireth to be baptized in my name, on this wise shall ye baptize them—Behold, ye shall go down and stand in the water, and in my name shall ye baptize them.

And now behold, these are the words which ye shall say, calling them by name, saying:

Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

And then shall ye immerse them in the water, and come forth again out of the water.

And after this manner shall ye baptize in my name; . . .¹⁶

Diego de Landa, the first Catholic bishop who labored among the Itzá Mayas of Yucatán following the Spanish conquest, claimed that these Indians were practicing baptism at the time of the arrival of the Europeans. He described the baptismal rite which he had seen performed many times by them. T. A. Willard, in his book, *Lost Empires*, wrote:

According to illustrations in the hieroglyphic books, coupled with the statements of Bishop Landa, the ancient Itzá Mayas practiced baptism for which their word *Capucihil* means *to be born again*. Landa remarks that Yucatán was the only place in the Indies where the rite of baptism was observed prior to the arrival of the Spaniards.¹⁷

Dr. Sylvanus G. Morley, who was one of the world's outstanding authorities on the Mayas, in his book, *The Ancient Maya*, elaborated on Landa's description of baptism.¹⁸

The baptism rite described by Bishop Landa was performed by sprinkling the neophyte with holy water.¹⁹ As has been mentioned, the Nephites practiced baptism by immersion; however, toward the close of their history they adopted the practice of infant baptism. The Prophet Mormon denounced this apostate practice in the most vehement language.²⁰

Several writers have maintained that baptism was practiced by

¹⁶3 Nephi 11:22-28.

¹⁷T. A. Willard, *Lost Empires*, p. 422.

¹⁸Sylvanus G. Morley, *The Ancient Maya* (Palo Alto, Calif., 1946), pp. 184-186.

¹⁹Note: Bishop Landa's description of the Indians' baptismal rite as practiced in Yucatán at the time of the Spanish conquest indicates that the Itzás were practicing baptism by sprinkling. That does not prove that their ancestors had not baptized by immersion. The mode of baptism could have been changed by the Indians from the true mode of immersion which Christ taught their forefathers of Book of Mormon times, just as the mode of baptism was changed from immersion to sprinkling on the Eastern Hemisphere during the period when the "Great Apostasy" occurred in Christendom.

²⁰Moroni 8:8-26.

many tribes of Indians at the time of the Spanish conquest. These writers maintain that Bishop Landa was in error when he claimed that the Indians in Yucatán were the only ones practicing baptism when the Europeans arrived in the New World. Dr. P. De Roo presents evidence to sustain the view that the practice of baptism was widespread among the Indians. To quote:

. . . these missionaries, however, and other writers of that time assure us that baptism was administered in several American districts from time immemorial.

. . . the new-born infants of the Canary Islands were baptized by women, who poured water on their heads, . . . The Caribbean islanders and the Pennsylvania continentals of old used to solemnly plunge their babies into cold water in the presence of two witnesses—a man and a woman—and give them a name on that occasion. Baptism was conferred in the territories of Cempoala, Tezcuco, Tlacopan, and throughout the vast empire of Mexico. . . . Sahagun writes that when the holy bishop of Chiapas arrived at Campeche, in the year 1554, on his way to his diocese, in company with several Dominican friars, he not only saw what Montejo had written about the baptism of the Yucatecs, but also learned that all the natives of that country were baptized, no one being allowed to marry before the sacred ceremonies had been performed on him. It was the duty of all the Mayas to have their children baptized, for they believed that by this ablution they received a pure nature, were protected against evil spirits, and possible misfortunes. They held, moreover, that an unbaptized person, whether a man or woman, could not lead a good life or do anything well.

Baptism was in the Mexican empire a religious ceremony, which in Yucatán was called "*Zihil*," signifying to be born again; and the Nahua nations freely admitted that it would cleanse the soul from all sin, as will soon appear from the ceremonies with which it was administered.²¹

P. De Roo also claims that Bancroft states that "the rite was administered to children of both sexes at any time between the ages of three and twelve years."²²

From the evidence presented, it seems to the writer that the rite of baptism, which was practiced by the Nephites throughout their entire history, was handed down from age to age among the various Indian tribes. The rite practiced in various forms still survived at the time of the coming of the Europeans.

VISITING OLD CHICHEN ITZA

Old Chichén Itzá lies securely hidden in the jungles a few miles southwest of the other two archaeological zones. Its buildings are

²¹P. De Roo, *History of America before Columbus* (Philadelphia 1900), pp. 466-467.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 468.

in two principal groups. All of the members of the touring party trudged along a well-beaten path to the first group of archaeological remains. Here the guide showed us carved pillars which he claimed were definitely Egyptian-like in appearance. They date back to within two hundred years of the Book of Mormon period; in fact, it has been claimed that "the Itzá occupied Chichén Itzá in the year 514 of our era,"²³ or less than one hundred years after Moroni completed his work on the Nephite records. In the North Zone of Chichén Itzá, earlier that same day, we had observed Egyptian-like statuary. This Egyptian influence is of marked significance, since Lehi and his family brought much of that culture to America with them.

Some of us hiked farther into the jungles and visited the other section of Old Chichén Itzá. Here we observed the "Temple of the Three Lintels," a good example of the Maya classic architecture, erected back near Book of Mormon days when Maya art and architecture attained a peak in development. Night overtook us while we were at Old Chichén Itzá, and so we made our way back to the Mayaland Inn along the jungle train through darkness intensified by the thick growth of vegetation.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RUINS OF UXMAL AND KABAH

From Chichén Itzá our touring party returned to Mérida, the capital of Yucatán. This city is one of the loveliest, most quaint and interesting places that I have ever seen. We spent a day or two enjoying its people and places of interest, and then visited the archaeological sites of Uxmal (Oosh'-mäl) and Kabah (Kâ-bah').

Uxmal, which lies fifty miles south of Mérida, contains some of the most artistic archaeological structures found in any of the ancient Maya cities. The buildings, made by superb craftsmen, are ornamented with delicate, intricate designs of hewn stone. Writers have referred to the rockwork in the archaeological buildings at Uxmal as the ". . . jewel of Maya archaeological craftsmanship."²⁴

The Mayas were masterful builders. "As architects, designers and stone cutters, they excelled. The intrinsic beauty and symmetry of their temples and edifices, the intricate and marvelous carvings

²³José A. Erosa Peniche, *Guide Book to the Ruins of Chichén Itzá* (Mérida, Yucatán, 1954), p. 9.

²⁴José A. Erosa Peniche, *Guide Book to the Ruins of Uxmal* (Mérida, 1952), p. 15.

on columns and facades—sometimes covering the whole fronts of imposing buildings—are mute but striking testimonies of the knowledge and skill possessed by those ancient builders.”²⁵

We arrived at Uxmal just as the sun was appearing over the eastern horizon. As our cars pulled into the place reserved for parking the first structure to meet our gaze was a gigantic pyramid called the “Temple of the Dwarf” or the “House of the Magician.” Maya legend maintains that a dwarf erected this massive structure during one night. As we climbed the steps up its practically perpendicular side to its summit—which is one hundred two feet above the surrounding country—we concluded that whoever the builders of that gigantic structure were, they should be credited with an unusual accomplishment. A photograph of this tall pyramid is reproduced on the following page.

Fig. 40: TEMPLE OF THE DWARF, UXMAL, YUCATAN —————→

As we climbed down the west side of the Temple of the Dwarf, we observed that its cornice presented “. . . a highly elaborate ornamentation, the principal motif of which was stone panels with serpent reliefs, frets with serpent-like details . . . next [we observed] a series of jars and at the end a row of finely polished stones in the shape of snake vertebrae.”²⁶ The extensive use of the serpent motif gave evidence that the ancient builders of Uxmal were worshipers of Quetzalcoatl, the “White Bearded God.”²⁷

We next entered a large quadrangle plaza, measuring 258 feet by 214 feet, which was completely surrounded by four large rectangular buildings. Their ornate fronts face inward toward the enclosed courtyard. This archaeological group is called the “Nunnery.” The building across the west end is “profusely ornamented with feather-like motif [quetzal feathers]. . . . At a point forty-nine feet from each end of the facade we see two entwined serpents (rattlesnakes) . . . the head and tail of each lying to either side of the entwining point.”²⁸ The bodies of other serpents in diversified positions appeared in various places, as well as carvings of feathers beautifully executed.

This structure is known as the building of the “high priests” of Quetzalcoatl, connoting the worship of the “White Bearded God.”

²⁵*Yucatán—Land of the Maya*, p. 13.

²⁶Peniche, *op. cit.*, p. 30

²⁷*Idem.*

²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.



The "Temple of Venus," named by archaeologists, and the structure attached to it compose the buildings on the north of the plaza. They are claimed to have been erected to the Maya royalty. The structure across the east was erected to the warriors, and the one along the south of the quadrangle to the common people. The carved rock-veneering on these buildings is a masterpiece of artistry.

We next visited the "Governor's Palace." "This building, reared on three successive colossal terraces, is regarded as one of the most important and magnificent monuments in the New World."²⁹ The building is partially separated into three parts, a long middle section and two shorter end sections. The serpent symbol also appears in several places on this building. "On top of the doorway is a central V-shaped device composed of nine horizontally placed serpents with bar-like bodies and heads at both ends."³⁰ From an architectural viewpoint, the Governor's Palace is a real masterpiece of antiquity. Its arches, its gigantic size, its beautiful carved rockwork, and especially the symmetry of its lines, all contribute in presenting a harmonious unit which make this building a most spectacular structure. A Mexican writer concluded:

As a matter of truth, very few archaeological sites are as important as the city of Uxmal from a general point of view: Its great temples and huge pyramids, courts and palaces, each built on a different ground plan and level, all together, because of their crowded distribution, make the whole view to bring about a never-to-be-forgotten impression in the eyes of the visitor who feels compelled to pay a tribute of admiration to the great Maya architects of those ages whose ideas crystallized into such marvelous stone gems. Take for instance, the patio-facing facades of the East and West Ranges in the quadrangle of the Nunnery; or the east facade of the House of the Governor. Could ever be found anything in its kind so delicate, so profusely ornamented and so skillfully sculptured?³¹

Uxmal was linked in ancient times with Kabah—another large Maya city located six miles to the southeast—by a stone causeway or road which is now entirely covered with vegetation. A large arch composed of rock formed the gateway to Kabah.

About noon our touring party visited Kabah. Two beautiful buildings—the "Temple of Venus" and the "Temple of the Masks"—stand majestically on an eminence plainly visible to people who

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 53.

³⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 54-55

³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

pass on the highway. They are surrounded by other archaeological ruins.

We returned to Mérida that afternoon and took the plane for Mexico City, arriving after dark. It was Christmas Eve.

TOURING MEXICO

All of the members of our touring party were guests at the mission home for Christmas dinner and were entertained by a program presented during the afternoon by the missionaries. President and Sister Claudious Bowman, who preside over the Mexican Mission, stated that as long as they were preparing Christmas dinner for sixty-five missionaries, the addition of the twenty-one members of our touring party would make no added work whatsoever. Such generosity and hospitality are seldom seen.

We spent twelve days touring the various places of interest in Mexico in addition to the time we spent in Yucatán. We went to several outstanding archaeological sites in which we were intensely interested. At Tenayuca we viewed a large pyramid whose base is embellished with numerous serpents. We then went to the famous archaeological site of Teotihuacán, located twenty-six miles north of Mexico City. The extensive use of the Quetzalcoatl serpent motifs at these places connotes the worship of Quetzalcoatl, whom Latter-day Saints believe originally was the Savior. Some recent writers date Teotihuacán from the fourth to the ninth century A.D.³² Its beginning would be—according to those dates—during the closing period of Book of Mormon history.

We went approximately seventy miles east of Mexico City to the gigantic pyramid of Cholula which has a base covering approximately forty acres. Several ancient civilizations lived there, each building a pyramid covering the previously erected one; and so the huge Cholula pyramid presents the work of several successive peoples. The innermost structure was erected somewhere near B.C. 2500, and so it would date during the Jaredite period.

We traveled approximately two hundred miles southward to the city of Oaxaca, the center of the land of the famous Zapotec Indians. Situated on the top of a hill about four miles southwest of the city is Monte Alban (Mōn-tay' Āl-bān') with its unusual

³²*Archaeology in Mexico Today*, p. 19.



—*Photograph by Otto Done*

Fig. 41: PYRAMID OF SUN, TEOTIHUACAN, AND TOURING PARTY

José Dávila, the guide, showing the touring party members the cement which was made many years ago at Teotihuacán, Mexico. Temple of the Sun in background.

archaeological ruins. Archaeologists state that the first temples were erected approximately B.C. 1500 (Jaredite period); and that from that date a succession of worshipers of several races down to the time of the Spanish conquest carried forward their religious ceremonies at this sacred shrine.

Our touring party traveled thirty miles southeast of Oaxaca to Mitla (Meet'-là). The stone work at this archaeological site rates among the most beautiful in the Western Hemisphere. The veneered carved stones are inlaid on the walls of the buildings in exquisite mosaic patterns. These beautiful archaeological structures are commendable works of art. They were erected by the Zapotec, Mixtec, and other Indian descendants of Book of Mormon peoples.

We photographed a number of important relics in a private museum at Mitla, operated by E. R. Frissell; and then we returned to Oaxaca and visited the excellent archaeological museum in that city. The following day we returned to Mexico City.

In addition to our archaeological trips, we visited such tourist attractions as the cities of Cuernavaca (Kwer-nà-vä'-ca), Taxco (Tass'-co), and Acapulco (Ä-cà-pool'-cō); and within Mexico City, we visited the beautiful modernistic University of Mexico, the Cathedral of the City of Mexico, the Cathedral of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Xochimilco or the Floating Gardens, leather and silver shops, and especially the National Archaeological Museum and the Palace of Fine Arts.

Finally our most interesting tour of "Book of Mormon Lands" was completed, and on January 6, 1955, the party members returned by plane to Salt Lake City. I remained in Mexico, however, to study numerous additional archaeological sites with Otto Done and José Dávila.

CHAPTER 6

VISITING MESO-AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

MESO-AMERICA'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Mexico and its adjacent countries to the south—Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador—are oftentimes referred to as Meso-America. These countries are literally dotted with archaeological sites of marked importance which bear mute evidence that past civilizations have lived there. The Americans of past ages attained a relatively high culture, and their achievements were outstanding along numerous lines. The ancient Mayas of Yucatán, Tabasco, and Chiapas—all states of Mexico—as well as the Mayas of Guatemala, British Honduras, Honduras, and El Salvador left evidences of past accomplishments which have been a marvel to modern scholars, as well as to tourists. The Toltecs, Aztecs, Zapotecs (Zap'-oh-tecks), Olmecs, and numerous other Indian groups of Mexico left evidences of by-gone days of splendor and high achievements. Archaeological sites of all these ancient peoples have attracted the interest of explorers, adventurers, archaeologists, authors, and tourists. I became intensely interested.

PREPARATIONS TO VISIT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

José Dávila, Otto Done, and I went to see Dr. Eduardo Noguero, Director of Pre-Spanish Monuments in Mexico, and secured letters authorizing us to visit and take photographs at the major museums and archaeological sites throughout all of Mexico, including Yucatán. He graciously gave me approximately forty-five separate personal letters addressed to the directors of various archaeological sites and museums. His graciousness could not have been surpassed.

I also visited the Honorable Francis White, United States Ambassador to Mexico, and was cordially received. After he had inquired about the welfare of President J. Reuben Clark, Jr.—one of his personal friends for many years—and asked me to give his deep regards to him, Mr. White wrote me a letter of introduction to the United States Ambassador in Guatemala City, requesting that he



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 42: TEOPANZOLCO PYRAMID, MEXICO

Steps of the inner pyramid of the Teopanzolco archaeological ruins situated near the city of Cuernavaca, Mexico. Our party members shown on pyramid steps are, left to right: Lower two, Joseph Schmidt and Ernest Caldwell; next three, David Stevens, Milton R. Hunter and Leland Adamson; and Charles Schmidt at the right of photograph. See page 121 for a discussion of the "Pyramids at Teopanzolco."

extend to us any assistance or courtesy that we might need while in that country.

Otto, José, and I spent two or three days in Mexico City photographing the artifacts, murals, and monuments in the National Museum of Mexico and the Palace of Fine Arts, and in making preparations to leave for the jungles.

We assembled our photographic materials, which were quite extensive. We obtained army hammocks so we could sleep wherever night might overtake us. We took practically no food along, with the thought in mind that when we were in small settlements we would be able to purchase sufficient food to sustain us. One member of our party desired to take a gun along, arguing that we might need the gun to protect ourselves against hostile Indians or wild beasts, such as jaguars, which infest the jungles. We considered the matter for a few moments and then decided that it would be best not to have a gun with us. We would put our trust in the Lord, and we felt that he would bring us safely out of the jungles. The remainder of our equipment consisted of vioform tablets to ward off dysentery, paludine pills to prevent malaria, insect repellent number 612 to ward off mosquitoes, pills to disinfect drinking water which we would have to use directly from streams and lakes, canteens, matches, pocketknives, and a *machete* to cut away the jungle vegetation, as well as to protect ourselves against snakes and similar creatures. We also wore high-top shoes and leather gloves to give added protection against serpents and insects, and provided ourselves with an ample supply of rattlesnake serum. We took along a fairly good supply of inexpensive but useful presents for the Indians whom we hoped to induce to guide us to various archaeological ruins.

We all felt that we were blessed abundantly throughout the entire trip. We went entirely through our trip in the jungles and also in the small Indian towns without one minute's illness, without a mishap of any kind, and in all respects got along very well. We ate food on many occasions which one ordinarily might think would make him ill. We saw only two or three serpents, and they got out of our way as fast as possible. Although it is claimed that jaguars are numerous in the jungles of southern Mexico, the nearest we came to seeing one was at the home of the Lacandón Indians. One of the Indian men had recently killed a jaguar, and we saw its beautiful skin.

THE TREE OF LIFE AT IZAPA, MEXICO

On January 9, 1955, Otto, José, and I headed south from Mexico City by plane. Our first stop which took place early that afternoon was at the city of Tapachula (Tap-à-choo'-la), situated in the extreme southwest corner of Mexico. We arrived there in the early afternoon. After making reservations at a hotel, we hired a taxi to drive us several miles south of Tapachula to a place called Izapa (Ee-zap'-à). From the highway, we went a short distance into the jungles to a native's home where we secured the services of two small boys to guide us to the archaeological ruins. Our purpose was to see the famous stela which was discovered in 1939 by Matthew W. Stirling at Izapa on which was carved, according to archaeologists, "The Tree of Life."¹ Dr. M. Wells Jakeman² of the Brigham Young University wrote an article on this archaeological find in which he claims that the carving represents "Lehi's Dream," as recorded in the Book of Mormon.³ We spent the remainder of the afternoon chalking the various figures that had been carved anciently on the stela so we could be assured of obtaining good photographs of the carvings. After dark that night we returned to Tapachula and early the next morning were back at Izapa. We explored the archaeological site rather carefully, studying numerous other stelae and counted about fifty mounds which were pyramids in ancient times. We also took a number of photographs of the carving of the Tree of Life or Lehi's Dream on that famous stela.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RUINS OF KAMINALJUYU AND THE
GUATEMALA MUSEUM

It was a short flight from Tapachula to Guatemala City, occupying perhaps no more than one hour's time. We were met at the airport by Elder Toby Pingree, who shortly thereafter became a counselor in the mission presidency of the Central American Mission. Elder Pingree had made arrangements for us to hire an aviator and his small plane to take us to the various archaeological fields in Guatemala and Honduras. The mission president graciously consented for Elder Pingree to accompany us.

¹Matthew W. Stirling, *Stone Monuments of Southern Mexico* (Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution *Bulletin* 138) (Washington D. C., 1943), p. 61.

²Dr. M. Wells Jakeman, *Bulletin of the University* (Archaeological Society, Provo, March, 1953), pp. 26-49.

³1 Nephi 8:1-38.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 43: KAMINALJUYU PYRAMID, GUATEMALA

The author and two Guatemalan boys on one of the pyramids at the ruins of Kaminaljuyu, situated near Guatemala City. The most important tomb discovered at this archaeological site is in this pyramid.

The first spot of archaeological interest which we visited in Guatemala was the ruins of Kaminaljuyu (Käm-ee-näl-hoo'-you), located adjacent to the outskirts of Guatemala City. It is claimed by archaeologists that this site dates back into the early Christian period (about A.D. 320), and so its beginning was contemporaneous with the latter portion of the Book of Mormon. There are a number of mounds at that archaeological site which in ancient times were pyramids crowned with temples. Perhaps the temples were constructed of wood and have completely decomposed. Dr. Alfred V. Kidder, one of the greatest authorities on Maya archaeology, and other noteworthy scientists have done considerable work at this site and other ancient ruins in Guatemala. In some of these mounds at Kaminaljuyu they found tombs, the vaults of which were made of excellent cement. From these tombs they obtained such treasures as jade beads, jade beautifully decorated with Maya carvings, and other artifacts. These relics are housed in the National Museum in Guatemala City and photographs of some of them are shown later in the book.

As I looked at the cement vaults, I recalled the statements in the Book of Mormon wherein these ancient Nephites claimed to be

experts in making cement. Certainly this cement which had remained in good condition for nearly two thousand years was good cement.

The archaeological sites in the Guatemala highlands, such as Kaminaljuyu, Chukumuk near Lake Atitlán, and Alta Verapaz contained artifacts which antedate the Classic Maya remains which date from about A.D. 320. This early Meso-American culture is "*on a level with, and extraordinarily like, those of our own cultural ancestors of the ancient Near East, or Palestine.*"⁴ The Book of Mormon peoples came from that land. In the words of Sylvanus G. Morley, an eminent scholar in this field:

. . . the Maya civilization—or, better, *those cultural elements which led up to it*—had their beginnings between two and three thousand years ago, roughly some time during the first millennium before Christ, . . .⁵

We completed our work at Kaminaljuyu, and returned to Guatemala City to photograph the numerous important artifacts housed in the National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. We did not arrive back at the museum until late afternoon. The museum director received us cordially. On my visit there three weeks earlier, he allowed me to photograph whatever I desired. Some of the photographs taken on the first trip were not as good as they should have been and other objects I hadn't had time to photograph; and so we once again asked for the privilege of photographing the relics in the museum. He kindly granted us the privilege. Thirty minutes later he came to me and said, "It is time for the museum to close."

I replied, "We have hardly begun photographing the things which I desire to photograph. This will be our last opportunity to do this work in your museum, since we are going into the jungles in the morning."

Thereupon he replied: "You are perfectly welcome to stay here as long as you desire. I will close the museum and all of the employees will go home except a guard that we keep here throughout the night. He will be sitting by the front door. When you complete your work, he will let you out." Such graciousness could not be surpassed in any country.

⁴The Miraflores, Mamon-Chicanel, and Plaza de Meurtos underlie Classic Maya artifacts. They appear to belong to the early "Nahuale-Nephite-Lamanite" people of the documentary sources. Alfred V. Kidder, et al, Kaminaljuyu, Guatemala (1946), publication 561, Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C., pp. 241-244, 260.

⁵Sylvanus G. Morley, *The Ancient Maya* (1946), p. 40.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 44: BALL COURT AT XOCHICALCO, MEXICO

See page 122 for a discussion of the "Archaeological Zone of Xochicalco."

The National Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Guatemala City has an excellent collection of ancient Maya relics. Of special interest to us were the bearded men, who were Hebraic-like in appearance, the beautiful pieces of carved jade, the ancient stela that had been moved from Piedras Negras, and especially the reproduction of the Bonampak and the Uaxactún murals. There were also a number of interesting Maya incense burners, vases, and other ceramic pieces, and a stone carving of what had the appearance of being a deer's head. It had a forelock between its ears which hung down the front of its head similar to that on a horse. In talking to the museum director, I was told that it might be a representation of a horse's head.

THE ANCIENT ART CENTER OF COPAN

The sun had hardly arisen the following morning when we put our cameras, hammocks, and other necessary equipment in a small, one-motor plane, and five of us—Elder Toby Pingree, José Dávila, Otto Done, the aviator, and I—crowded into the two narrow seats

which had been made to accommodate no more than four people. As our plane left the Guatemala airport and climbed above the high mountain peaks east of the city, we soon learned that we had an excellent pilot. His name was Alfred Silva Romero. As a young man he had lived in Colombia, South America. He had joined the United States Navy and received his training as a pilot while serving. He now owned two or three small airplanes which he used to taxi people to various places in Central America and at times into Mexico.

Although, according to the calendar, it was midwinter, the weather was perfect. The sun shone down as warmly as it does in our country on the most beautiful spring or fall days. The winter months in Guatemala are ideal.

As we passed over the rugged mountains of Guatemala and then descended to the lowlands toward the eastern side of the country, the pilot kept the plane not far above the treetops. This gave us an unusually good perspective of the landscape below us. During the next few days, we had the privilege of viewing much of Guatemala from the air. I became fully convinced that Guatemala is one of the most beautiful countries in the world.

The first stop on our journey was Copán. These famous archaeological ruins lie just over the border of Guatemala in Honduras. The plane landed on a dirt airstrip, and the aviator taxied it back to the side of a little store. As we got out of it, we were met by a small group of curious Hondurans who perhaps sit on the steps of the store and wait for the occasional arrival of airplanes bringing people to the Copán ruins.

Since our itinerary was crowded we had very little time to loiter, and so as soon as possible we took our cameras from the plane and hiked towards the archaeological ruins. They lay within perhaps a half mile of the airstrip.

Few times in my life have I had greater thrills than I experienced during the following three or four hours as we observed numerous beautiful stelae, pyramids, old temples, the Ball Court, and the Hebraic-like representation of a bearded man on a vase. These constituted the principal things of interest at these unusual archaeological ruins. Copán is considered by the archaeologists as the ancient cultural center of the Mayas during the Classic Period. The dated stone monuments or stelae in Copán go back to as early

as A.D. 490, which is only seventy years after the close of the Book of Mormon records.

Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson states that during the Classic Period of the Mayas, near the date of about A.D. 300, they began to erect large stone stelae.⁶ As a result of his extensive research, he arrived at the following conclusion:

On the strength of architecture and hieroglyphs, Maya civilization was well under way by the middle of the fourth century, but it was not until the fifth century was well advanced that Maya sculpture had developed fully its own style.

Before A.D. 450 the custom of erecting dated monuments was, so far as present evidence indicates, confined to half a dozen sites clustered within an area of less than two hundred square miles in the forest land of northern Petén. By the end of the century, the custom had spread northward to Oxkintok, in distant Yucatán, and southeastward to Copán, over the border into modern Honduras. . .

. . . Maya had surely been living in Copán and Oxkintok long before they started carving stelae or erecting vaulted buildings. These were manifestations of a spreading cult, just as mosques and Arabic script mark the spread of Islam.⁷

According to the quotations just given from Thompson and the opinion of other Maya archaeologists, it is quite likely that Copán was a flourishing town during the latter part of the Book of Mormon period. The Maya culture which developed there would, therefore, be an outgrowth of Nephite-Lamanite civilization.

In regards to the purpose of the stelae, Dr. Thompson states:

Stelae bear witness to the incredible preoccupation with the mysteries of time which so profoundly affect Maya culture. Priest-astronomers recorded on these stone shafts their progress in astronomy and mathematics; the best artists were employed in carving on them representations of their gods, and for them were reserved the most important positions before pyramids and palaces.⁸

For perhaps four hundred years the city of Copán served as one of the great culture centers in the Old Maya Empire. It has been compared to Alexandria in Egypt by some writers. Dr. Thompson gives an excellent description of Copán, which I shall quote:

⁶J. Eric S. Thompson, *The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1954), p. 53.

⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 55.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 45: STELAE-STUDED CEREMONIAL COURT, COPAN, HONDURAS

The author photographing some of the beautifully carved stelae.

Copán, 2,000 feet above sea level, backing (not facing) on the river of the same name, stood high in both science and art. This center appears to have been in the van in solving problems connected with the length of the tropical year, a matter of supreme importance to the Maya for ritual and divination, and there is some evidence that astronomers of Copán either formulated the extremely good eclipse tables used by the Mayas, or were sufficiently intelligent to recognize the brilliance of an outsider's work and embody his ideas in their own system. Yet in art Copán was equal to any other Maya city, and in one respect perhaps the head of all, for the personages sculptured on some of its stelae stand out from the stone mass of the shafts in a remarkable manner, and the friezes depicting seated individuals reveal exceptional skill in portraiture. In architecture, the inspiring hieroglyphic stairway of

Copán stands alone. The rise of each step of this stone stairway is decorated with hieroglyphics, each deeply and carefully carved. The flight of sixty-three steps rises majestically to a height of eighty-six feet above the level of the court. At intervals were seated five figures of gods or priests, each some six feet high, as though guarding the ascent to the temple which once crowned the summit. There is a decorated ramp on each side of the stairway, making a total breadth of thirty-three feet. The ramps, too, are elaborately carved with celestial bird-and-serpent monsters. . . .

From the door of this temple the Maya had a fine view of the ball court below and slightly to the right, with the stelae-studded ceremonial court beyond, or if one turned half-left, he saw the temple with its beautifully sculptured friezes of individuals and mythical beings. . . .

This great city, with its magnificent stelae, with the soft beauty of its light-green trachyte stone used in such imposing masses, and with the ornate pomp of its great hieroglyphic stairway, has an emotional magnificence enhanced by the grandeur of the surrounding mountains—*“Each give each a double charm / As pearls upon an Aethiop’s arm.”* There is a peaceful splendor here, which, the wickedness of child sacrifice forgotten or forgiven, now invokes the incomparable third movement of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony.⁹

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OF QUIRIGUA AND TAYASAL

By mid-afternoon we had completed our photographic work and observations of the archaeological marvels of Copán; and so we returned to the plane and flew to Quiriguá. Upon landing at the airport of that city, we found that we were nine miles from the archaeological ruins. There was no highway to them. The only way we could reach them was by going on the United Fruit Company’s railway. To do so it would have been necessary for us to lay over until one o’clock the next day. We didn’t have time in our itinerary to wait, and so we had to leave without seeing the marvelous archaeological site of Quiriguá; however, the following year I had that privilege

We next flew to Flores (Flor'-ays), located on an island in Lake Petén. We stayed there that night and the following morning visited the archaeological ruins of Tayasal (Tä-yä-säl'). This place served at one time as the home of the Itzá Mayas who had fled from Chichén Itzá at the time of the Spanish conquest and settled in Lake Petén. They continued the Maya culture of erecting stelae until their conquest by the Spaniards in A.D. 1697.

For sheer beauty of scenery and natural setting, perhaps the modern town of Flores and the ancient archaeological zone of

⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.



—*Photograph by Otto Done*

Fig. 46: FLORES AND TAYASAL ON ISLANDS IN LAKE PETÉN, GUATEMALA

The present-day town of Flores situated on an island in Lake Petén, Guatemala. The archaeological ruins of Tayasal are in the jungles on the elevated point of the large island toward the left side of the photograph.

Tayasal are unsurpassed. I have never seen any place which I thought was more beautiful.

VISITING TIKAL AND UAXACTUN

Before noon we left the beautiful site of Flores and flew to Tikal (Tee-käl'), located in the lowland jungle country of northeastern Guatemala. We arrived shortly before noon. As the airplane

landed on a dirt airstrip covered with tall grass, a large flock of wild turkeys flew into the surrounding jungles. Tikal is one of the oldest of the Maya cities of the Classic Period. According to archaeologists, it was also the largest ancient Maya city, having perhaps at one time a population of one to two million people at its height. According to glyphs recorded on stelae, archaeologists are of the opinion that this city flourished as early as the beginning of the fourth century A.D.; i.e., by A.D. 300. A number of gigantic temple-crowned pyramids were erected at Tikal by the ancient builders. The highest of the pyramids stood 190 feet, and it was capped with a temple which stood perhaps an additional twenty feet higher. Dr. Thompson states: "A very rough estimate of the area of the pyramid and stairway alone indicates a volume of about half a million cubic feet of rubble and masonry to support three rooms which have a combined floor space of less than 150 square feet."¹⁰

After getting out of the airplane we hurried along a jungle trail for perhaps about a mile from the airstrip to the first tall pyramid. During the next several hours we climbed to the top of pyramid after pyramid and enjoyed thinking of the people with their ancient ceremonies who had occupied this city during late Book of Mormon times and thereafter.

We observed cement in a number of places. The rooms were finished with a beautiful white plaster. Somebody had dug into the plaster in the doorway of one of the buildings. I measured it and found that it was eight inches thick. We recalled that the Book of Mormon historians claimed that the Nephites became experts in the use of cement; and from the appearance of that building and others, they and their posterity also became expert in the use of plaster and stucco.

The Mayas at Tikal erected many stelae. Archaeologists have counted eighty-six of them. Many of them were covered with stucco and the inscriptions carved thereon. The stucco has dropped off, and so at the present time sixty-five of the stelae are plain.¹¹ In the words of Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson, describing the Mayas during the Classic Period:

City after city adopted the stela cult, and the cities vied with one another in erecting temple-topped pyramids and "palaces" and in beautifying buildings

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 67.

and monuments with sculpture and modeled stucco. Hieroglyphic inscriptions have been found at no less than ninety sites. . . . Tikal has a number of texts sculptured on altars and wooden lintels. . . . These numerous inscriptions, taken in conjunction with the huge building programs, indicate the tremendous activity that marked the Classic Period throughout the lowlands.¹²

Not long before sundown we flew from Tikal to Uaxactún (Wash-ack-toon'). During the following forenoon we visited the intensely interesting archaeological ruins at that place. One of the earliest dates yet discovered was carved on a stela at Uaxactún.

This stela records in dreadfully eroded glyphs the equivalent in the Maya calendar (according to the most generally accepted correlation) of April 9, A.D. 328. It was still standing, although very much the worse for wear, when the late Maya scholar Sylvanus Morley found it in 1916, nearly sixteen hundred years after its erection.

Actually we can push the development of hieroglyphic writing at Uaxactún farther back towards the beginning of the Christian era. Stela 9 had before it an altar which was the reshaped lower half of an upper stela (No. 10). Unfortunately, the small glyphs on this surviving fragment are too weathered to be deciphered, and it is not possible to say whether it was placed as the altar of Stela 9 at the time of the latter's dedication. However, Tatiana Proskouriakoff, the outstanding student of Maya sculpture, believes it to be earlier than Stela 9. . . . There is, accordingly, a good chance that this monument carried the stela record at Uaxactún farther back towards the beginning of the Christian era.¹³

Dr. Spinden's correlation of Maya dates places the dates 260 years earlier than the one used by Dr. Thompson, and so Spinden's dating would place Stelae 9 at Uaxactún at A.D. 68. Either date, however, would be within Book of Mormon times, since Moroni did not complete the records until A.D. 421.

Stela 9 stands in front of an old pyramid which some archaeologists have dated in the B.C. period. We were highly thrilled to visit the archaeological ruins at Uaxactún, knowing that we were in places which were occupied during the Nephite period. The plaster on the walls, the stucco work, and the cement were very much like those at Tikal. This is understandable, since they were developed during the same period and located only fifteen miles apart.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RUINS OF ZACULEU NEAR HUEHUETENANGO

About noon we left Uaxactún and flew to the archaeological site of Zaculeu (Zac'-à-loo). The ancient city of Zaculeu stands

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.



Fig. 47: ZACULEU ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRUCTURES, GUATEMALA

Two archaeological structures at the ruins of Zaculeu, situated three miles from Huehuetenango, Guatemala.

on a magnificent plateau in the shadow of the Cuchumatanes Mountains in western Guatemala. The site is three miles southwest of the city of Huehuetenango. (Way-way-te-nän'-go). The Mayas were still living at Zaculeu at the time of the Spanish conquest. They offered the fiercest sort of resistance to Gonzalo de Alvarado before they were defeated in 1525.

Between February, 1946, and April, 1949, archaeologists, sponsored by the United Fruit Company, restored a number of the ancient buildings at Zaculeu to the condition they were at the time of the Spanish conquest. There are forty-one mounds at this ancient archaeological site. Only certain ones were selected for restoration. All the pottery, ornaments of jade, gold, copper, and alloy were classified, and a typical selection was placed in a small museum near the archaeological structures.

At Zaculeu, as at numerous other archaeological sites, we noticed that there were three rooms in many of the buildings. As the reader will see in the photographs, there are three doorways leading into two of the buildings. We observed at Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, that there were three doorways leading into the "Home of the Three Brothers," and the same fact holds true in regards to the "Temple of the Painted Walls" at Bonampak. Also there are three mounds or temples on the east end of the Quetzalcoatl quadrangle of Teotihuacán, Mexico. Many of the carvings of serpents at Chichén Itzá have three rattles. I do not know whether or not this continuous repetition of threes throughout the ancient archaeological sites has any special significance; however, guides at the various archaeological zones claimed that it does. Several guides told us that these repetitions of threes were symbolic of the Godhead, or the three members of the Holy Trinity. It is quite logical to believe that such

may have been the case, since the ancestors of the American Indians had the true gospel of Jesus Christ, with a thorough understanding of the Godhead

We left the archaeological site of Zaculeu when darkness came and flew back to the city of Guatemala.

VISITING ARCHAEOLOGICAL RUINS IN YUCATAN, BONAMPAK, AND PALENQUE

The following day Otto, José, and I flew from Guatemala City to Yucatán, Mexico, leaving Elder Toby Pingree to resume his missionary labors in Guatemala. We spent one day at Chichén Itzá, going there primarily to take moving pictures of the ruins. The following day we did the same type of work at Uxmal and Kabah. One of the unusual structures that we photographed was the famous "Arch of Kabah," which served in ancient times as the gateway to the city. It is situated on the west side of the Kabah archaeological zone. The ancient Maya inhabitants of that city traveled on a paved highway through the arch to the city of Uxmal. The photograph on the following page shows the writer standing between the two pillars of the Arch of Kabah. Otto Done was the photographer.

Otto, José, and I traveled from Kabah to Campeche by car. About five o'clock that afternoon we got on the train to travel to Tenosique, where we arrived about twelve hours later.

As soon as daylight came we arranged with a man who owned a small plane to carry us into the jungles near Bonampak. Our purpose was to visit the "Temple of the Painted Walls," situated in the jungles of southeastern Mexico. During that day and the two that followed, we had an unusual and intensely interesting experience, which included hiking thirty-two miles, seeing the unusual Maya murals of white and dark peoples on the walls of an ancient temple at Bonampak, and visiting with the Lacandón Indians. Our trip to Bonampak and our description of the Lacandóns will be described in the following chapter.

After our trip in the jungles, the aviator with his small private plane met us on the dirt airstrip sixteen miles from Bonampak and flew us to the famous archaeological site of Palenque. For many years I had strongly desired to see Palenque, since I had read in the archaeological books about the famous crosses found there, and



the Egyptian-type burial recently discovered by Dr. Ruz. These things furnish valid Book of Mormon evidences. Our trip to the archaeological site of Palenque was most interesting and profitable. After we had completed our work at that archaeological zone, the aviator picked us up and took us to Villahermosa (Vee'-yá-air-mō'-sa). At that place we boarded a plane on a commercial airline and flew back to Mexico City.

← Fig. 48: ARCH OF KABAH, YUCATAN, MEXICO

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OF COPILCO, AND CUICUILCO

According to most archaeologists, thousands of years ago the valley of Mexico was an active center of civilization. The rivers watered rich cultivated fields. The active volcano Xitle, nestled in the Ajusco Mountain Range, stood above the homes and farms of these ancient Americans. The people who lived during that ancient period are referred to by archaeologists as archaic man, but perhaps they date within the Jaredite period. The volcano Xitle erupted, spreading forth flames and rock with such fury that the inhabitants of the valley and their homes were covered with burning lava, and the river beds were completely filled. Finally the volcano tired and died, leaving part of the valley covered with black stone, a permanent reminder of her terrible wrath. The lava cooled, and as time passed, plants and animal life eventually once again filled the valley. Men returned to reoccupy it. They opened roads there and built their houses on the black rock. They called this land *Pedregal*.

President Claudious Bowman of the Mexican Mission, Otto Done, and I, went to the south end of Mexico City to view the archaeological site of Copilco (Co-peel'-co). Through the investigations made by the Department of Anthropology, human remains, an abundance of ceramics, and utensils of stone have been found by tunneling under a thirty foot layer of lava. These remains were found in the form of a tomb, and so the scholars came to the conclusion that this spot was an ancient burial ground used by the inhabitants of Mexico Valley before the eruption of Xitle. The accompanying photograph shows President Bowman and the writer at Copilco, observing the massive layer of lava which covers this ancient archaeological site. We then went through the iron gateway into the tunnel to view the skeletons and artifacts found by those who excavated at this site.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 49: COPILCO ARCHAEOLOGICAL ZONE, MEXICO

President Claudius Bowman of the Mexican Mission and the author looking at the thick layer of lava which covers the Copilco archaeological ruins.

Anthropologists claim that the human skeletons found at Copilco are anthropologically similar to modern man. I measured the length of the one shown in the photograph. It indicated that their people were very large, since this particular skeleton was six feet tall. As I looked at this large skeleton, I recalled that the Book of Mormon implied that the Jaredites were of very large stature.

We left Copilco and drove three miles south of Mexico City to the archaeological ruins of Cuicuilco (Kwee-kweel'-co). It consists of a large pyramid, or truncated cone, circular in form, some 450 feet in diameter at the base. Archaeologists claim that it consists of three constructions, built at various times, each superimposed upon the other. The outside walls rise at an inclination of forty-five degrees. The walls are broken by three terraces respectively thirteen feet wide, thirty-eight feet, and eighty-six feet wide. The entire elevation of the pyramid at Cuicuilco is about one hundred feet. The

Fig. 50: COPILCO TOMB, MEXICO

Pottery and skeletons of men in positions as found by archaeologists in Copilco tomb, Mexico City.

—Photograph by Otto Done





—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 51: CUICUILCO PYRAMID, MEXICO

The large truncated pyramid of Cuicuilco, situated three miles south of Mexico City.

fourth terrace, with a diameter of one hundred thirty feet, forms a top platform on which in the distant past undoubtedly rested a small sacred temple and perhaps a sacrificial stone. Around the bottom part of the pyramid extends a thick layer of lava. Archaeologists have excavated down the side of the pyramid for a number of feet and found that it was built before the volcano Xitle erupted.

Some writers suggest the date of Copilco and Cuicuilco at B.C. 2,500 to 3,000. Those dates would fit well with the Jaredite period. Other writers believe that these ancient cities date much earlier.

We visited a small museum near the ruins of Cuicuilco. It contains the relics which have been taken out of the pyramid. Dr. Bryan Cummings, professor of archaeology at the University of Arizona, together with Dr. Manuel Ganio, was responsible for the excavation of the temple. Dr. Bryan Cummings wrote: "Abundant remains of human artifacts uncovered at the level of the base of the great temple as well as the form and material of the edifice itself are ample evidence of the large, vigorous, and aggressive population."¹⁴

TENAYUCA PYRAMID

We next visited the Tenayuca (Ten-à-you'-cà) archaeological site which lies six miles northwest of Mexico City. The Tenayuca pyramid is oftentimes called the "Edifice of the Serpents," because of

¹⁴Cited in *Archaeology in Mexico Today* (Mexico, D. F., 1952), p. 11.



—*Photograph by Otto Done*

Fig. 52: TEOPANZOLCO PYRAMID, MEXICO

Large pyramid at Teopanzolco near the present city of Cuernavaca, Mexico.

the numerous coiled serpents which the ancient builders placed at the base of the pyramid and also the rows of serpents' heads around the structure.

Archaeologists have excavated through the pyramid and have found that the structure was composed of five superimposed structures. It took perhaps three hundred years for the builders to construct this edifice.

Tenayuca was the capital city for an Indian ruler named Xolotl, the great leader of the Chichiluc Empire, which came to an end during the latter part of the eleventh century.

The serpents at Tenayuca are not plumed serpents like the ones at Teotihuacán, Chichén Itzá, and other Toltec sites, as were also those at the numerous Maya zones. The characteristics of the Tenayuca serpents seem to differ from the Quetzalcoatl serpents.

PYRAMIDS AT TEOPANZOLCO

Otto Done, his wife, Charles Schmidt, Joseph Schmidt, David Stevens, and I, accompanied by Leland Adamson and Ernest Caldwell who had come down from Utah to join us in visiting some of the archaeological zones, traveled south from Mexico City to Cuernavaca. Near the northeast corner of the city stands a large pyramid called Teopanzolco (Tay-ō-pan-zōl'-co). This pyramid is the last vestige of what was once the magnificent capital of the Tlahuica nation. The style of the pyramid is typically Aztec. Both of these Indian tribes were of the Nahua culture.

This large structure was formed by two pyramidal structures, one superimposed upon the other. The inner building was erected first, and sometime later the outside pyramid was superimposed on it. At the north end of the pyramid there are three superimposed structures, instead of two. A steep double stairway leads to the top of the archaeological ruin. At one time there stood two temples on top of the structure. Here the priests offered their sacrifices and performed their ceremonies.

This archaeological ruin would have very little to do with Book of Mormon history, since it was erected many years after the close of the history of that ancient people except that the Book of Mormon peoples may have constituted a part of the progenitors of the ancient inhabitants of Teopanzolco.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ZONE OF XOCHICALCO

After leaving the ancient pyramid near the charming city of Cuernavaca, we continued on down the highway toward Taxco; however, before arriving at that city we turned off the highway at Alpuyecá to visit the hill of Xochicalco (Shō-chee-cäl'-co) which means the "House of Flowers." The ancient city, situated on the tops of three tall hills, is dated at approximately A.D. 1,000.

The principle temple is covered with ". . . carved colossal feathered serpents of unusually elegant undulatory design in rock. . . ." ¹⁵

The principle monument is the great Xochicalco pyramid. This is formed of two parts, covered with basalt rock. This possesses a similarity with the Temple of Quetzalcoatl in Teotihuacán, in that the stone base is dressed with elaborately carved rock. ¹⁶

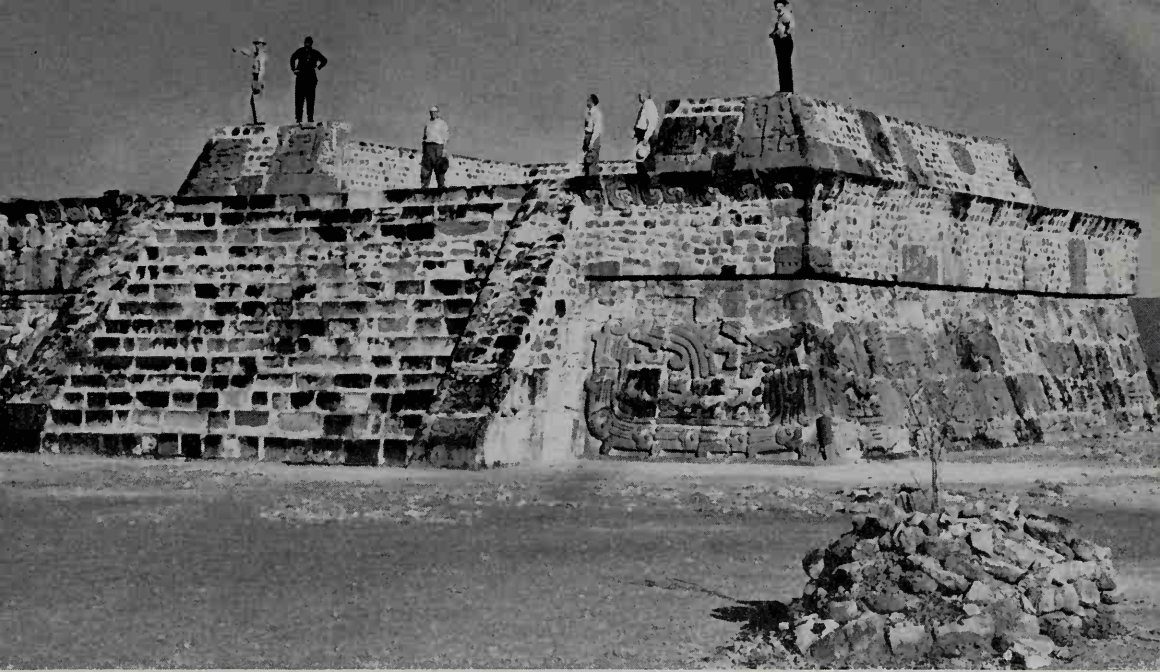
Archaeologists have not fully decided who constructed those ancient pyramids at Xochicalco. Dr. George C. Vaillant, the outstanding authority on the Aztecs of Mexico, states: "The main temple has a superb carved facade which would suggest a Maya origin were it not for the fine dates and realistic symbols of Mixteca-Puebla culture."¹⁷ It has been suggested by other writers that "It is believed that they [builders of Xochicalco] were Toltecs."¹⁸

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁷George C. Vaillant, *Aztecs of Mexico* (Garden City, New York, 1948), p. 276.

¹⁸*Archaeology in Mexico Today, op. cit.*, p. 36.



—*Photograph by Otto Done*

Fig. 53: XOCHICALCO PYRAMID, MEXICO

Principal pyramid at Xochicalco, Mexico. Observe the carving of feathered serpents around the base of the pyramid.

The designs of the plumed serpents and also the carvings of men who appear to be wearing quetzal feathers seem to identify this culture with that of the Toltecs of Teotihuacán and the Mayas who worshiped Quetzalcoatl, the “White Bearded God,” or Jesus Christ. As the readers will observe from looking at the photographs of the principal pyramid of Xochicalco, the builders were masterful workmen. The carvings were beautifully executed.

The entire Xochicalco ruins consist of three hills that are connected by means of highways. The structures in ancient times not only served as a religious center but also as an effective fortress, in which may be seen high walls and deep pits built for protection in case of attack. Perhaps one of the most unusual features of the hill of Xochicalco is its great number of subterranean passages. Some of the tunnels that enter the side of the hill still preserve remains of paved floors, columns, and stuccoed walls. One of the tunnels ends in a small room that has a hole in the roof through which it is believed that the residents of this city studied astronomical phenomena.

This is an unusually interesting place and one which supplied added Book of Mormon evidences.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 54: PLUMED SERPENTS ON XOCHICALCO PYRAMID

A close view of the carved colossal feathered serpents which cover the base of the pyramid at Xochicalco.

TEMPLE OF MALINALCO

The following day we visited one of the most unusual archaeological structures that I have seen. It is a temple that had been hewed out of solid rock near the top of a mountain. It is called Malinalco (Mäl-ee-näl'-cō). The people who carved this edifice, called the "Temple of the Eagles and Tigers," upon the mountain-side settled in a small valley south of the large valley in which Toluca is located. The snow-covered peak, *Nevada de Toluca*, is in full view of the archaeological ruins of Malinalco. George Vaillant describes the unusual feat accomplished in carving this temple as follows:

... A recent excavation in a cliff overhanging Malinalco, near Tenancingo, State of Mexico, brought to light a temple complex largely hewed from living rock, which thrusts the Egyptian rock tombs of Abu-Simbal into the limbo of provincial opera-house scenery.¹⁹

Many archaeologists have claimed and many of them still do maintain that the inhabitants of ancient America did not have steel

¹⁹Vaillant, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

implements to use in erecting their temples and carving their stelae. The theory that has been generally accepted is that they used only rock implements to do all such work.

As our party members looked at these unusual archaeological remains of Malinalco, especially the "Temple of the Eagles and Tigers," we wondered how any people could carve such a building out of the ledge, even with the excellent steel implements that we have at the present time. Two large tigers or jaguars were carved out of solid rock. One sat on each side of the steps that led up to the main part of the temple. The temple itself had been carved completely out of the solid ledge. Inside the temple two or three large eagles, perhaps five or six feet in length, and a similar number of tigers or jaguars of similar size were carved out of the solid rock floor and also of solid rock walls. Flights of stairs carved out of the rock ran up the side of the temple as well as up the front of the temple. To the north of the main edifice these ancient builders had carved several large rooms out of the solid ledge. How they accomplished this feat was past our comprehension.

The historians who wrote both the Jaredite and Nephite histories, as recorded in the Book of Mormon, stated that these ancient Americans had iron and also highly refined steel. During the earlier part of Jaredite history, Corihor, King Kib's son, replaced his father by force upon the throne. This made one of the other brothers, Shule, very angry. We shall let the following quotation tell the story:

And it came to pass that Shule was angry with his brother; and Shule waxed strong, and became mighty as to the strength of man; and he was also mighty in judgment.

Wherefore he came to the hill Ephraim, and he did molten out of the hill, and made swords out of steel for those whom he had drawn away with him; and after he had armed them with swords he returned to the city Nehor and gave battle unto his brother Corihor, by which means he obtained the kingdom and restored it unto his father Kib.²⁰

Towards the middle of the Jaredite period, during the reign of King Kib when the Jaredites were at the height of their culture, the Jaredite historian wrote:

And they did work in all manner of ore, and they did make gold, and silver, and iron, and brass, and all manner of metals; and they did dig it out

²⁰Ether 7:8-9.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 55: TEMPLE OF THE EAGLES AND TIGERS AT MALINALCO, MEXICO

of the earth; wherefore they did cast up mighty heaps of earth to get ore, of gold, and of silver, and of iron, and of copper. And they did work all manners of fine work.²¹

The Nephite historians also make definite claims that their people knew how to manufacture steel and made extensive use of

²¹*Ibid.*, 10:23.

it. Nephi, one of the prophet-leaders who directed the group of colonists from Jerusalem to America about B.C. 600, brought with him a bow made of steel. Regarding it, he remarked: "And it came to pass that as I, Nephi, went forth to slay food, behold, *I did break my bow, which was made of fine steel: . . .*"²²

Nephi also brought Laban's sword from the Holy City to the New World. He described the sword as follows: "And I beheld his sword, and I drew it forth from the sheath thereof; and the hilt thereof was of pure gold, and the workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine, and I saw that *the blade thereof was of the most precious steel.*"²³ He used that sword as a pattern in manufacturing numerous others for his people. He wrote: "And I, Nephi, did take the sword of Laban, and after the manner of it, did make many swords, . . ." ²⁴ Throughout the thousand years of Nephite history on the Western Hemisphere, in their wars the people used swords made of steel.²⁵ There are over one hundred fifty statements scattered throughout the entire Book of Mormon which definitely declare that both Nephites and Lamanites used swords in their numerous battles.

The inhabitants of ancient America not only used steel, but they also mined and refined numerous metals, including iron. After the colonists had arrived in America and Nephi had become the leader of the Nephites, he taught them many industries. To quote:

And I did teach my people to build buildings, and to work all manner of wood, and of iron, and of copper and of brass, and of steel, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious ores, which were in great abundance.²⁶

About two hundred fifty years later, Jarom, the record-keeper, wrote the following regarding the Nephites:

And we multiplied exceedingly and spread upon the face of the land and became exceedingly rich in gold, in silver, in precious things, and in fine workmanship of wood, in buildings, and in machinery, and also in iron and copper, and brass and steel, making all manner of tools of every kind to till the ground, and weapons of war—yea, the sharp pointed arrow and the quiver, and the dart, and the javelin, and all preparations for war.²⁷

Approximately two hundred forty years after Jarom wrote, the record-keeper describes the high taxes that a wicked king, named

²²1 Nephi 16:18.

²³*Ibid.*, 4:9.

²⁴2 Nephi 5:14.

²⁵Omni 1:17; Mosiah 22:2; Alma 1:9-12; 2:1; 17:39; 57:3; Mormon 6:15; Moroni 9:2.

²⁶2 Nephi 5:15.

²⁷Jarom 1:8.

Noah, placed upon the Nephites. To quote: "And he laid a tax of one-fifth part of all they possessed, a fifth part of their gold, and their silver, and a fifth part of their ziff, and of their copper, and of their brass, and their iron."²⁸ And then the historian told what use was made of the articles received of the proceeds of taxation:

And it came to pass that King Noah built many elegant and spacious buildings; and he ornamented them with fine work of wood and all manner of precious things, of gold, and of silver, and of iron, and of brass, and of ziff, and of copper.²⁹

A sufficient number of quotations have been given from both Jaredite and Nephite history to show that their records definitely maintain that those ancient peoples possessed iron and steel and used them extensively. The archaeological ruins at Malinalco seemed to the writer to indicate strongly that the descendants of Book of Mormon peoples in Meso-America continued to use steel; otherwise how could such a feat have been accomplished?

The members of our party will retain vivid memories of the trip to Malinalco. This archaeological zone was situated in the mountains off the main highway. Since we had to go over very rough roads to reach it, Otto Done and the driver of the other car preferred leaving their cars in the town on the main highway. We hired two Mexicans who took us to the ruins in their old automobiles. We soon found that their cars were heavily infested with fleas. By the time we arrived at our cars from the ruins all of us had plenty of evidence to verify that fact!

THE ROUND PYRAMID AT CALIXTLAHUACA

A few miles north of the city of Toluca, Mexico, is located the famed round pyramid at Calixtlahuaca (Ca-leesh-tlà-wah'-cà). The unusual feature about this pyramid is that it is round. Archaeologists claim that it was erected during three different periods of time and dedicated to the Wind God. This pyramid was built many years after the close of Book of Mormon history. It merely adds one more evidence to the cultural achievements of the people of ancient America.

After visiting this interesting archaeological site we returned to Mexico City.

²⁸Mosiah 11:3.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 11:8.



—*Photograph by Otto Done*

Fig. 56: ROUND PYRAMID OF CALIXTLAHUACA, MEXICO

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OF TEOTIHUACAN AND TULA

Three of the most important archaeological sites which we visited in the vicinity of Mexico City were Teotihuacán, Tula, and El Tajín (Ta-heen'). The builders of all three of these ancient cities were worshipers of Quetzalcoatl, the "White Bearded God," or Jesus Christ. All three groups of people had a close relationship to each other and were perhaps from the same general stock—the Toltecs and the Olmecs, whom we have identified as coming from the original Nephites, Mulekites, and Lamanites.

We took a two days' trip to Tula and El Tajín from Mexico City. Tula lies a few hours' ride north of Mexico City. The famous Catholic sixteenth century missionary and historian, Father Sahagun, wrote that Quetzalcoatl, the principle deity of the Toltecs, resided in Tula. Before 1942 archaeologists were at a loss in regards to the location of Tula; however, at that date in excavating in the state of Hidalgo, Mexico, they discovered an archaeological site which proved to be Tula, spoken of by Sahagun. Indian traditions maintain that in ancient times the "White Bearded God" visited their ancestors at this particular place.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 57: ARCHAEOLOGICAL ZONE OF TULA, MEXICO

Giant stone statues at Tula, beautifully sculptured, originally served as supports at the entrance of the temples. One of them has been moved from Tula to the National Museum in Mexico City. People in the photograph, left to right: Charles Schmidt, Milton R. Hunter, Joseph Schmidt, Mrs. Otto Done and the Mexican guide at Tula.

Present-day archaeologists and writers are agreed that Tula served at one time as the headquarters of the Toltec empire, and of course they think it was the Tula located in the state of Hidalgo. They differ, however, in their opinion as to the time that the city was founded. Most writers would place the date of the founding of Tula somewhere between A.D. 245 and A.D. 752, and the abandonment of the city between A.D. 960 and A.D. 1168. The exact cause for the people's leaving is unknown, but probably they left because of famine, following years of severe drought. After the abandonment of Tula, the people dispersed and went to other regions which then or later became important. Some of them perhaps settled at Cholula, Teotihuacán, Cozcatlán, Copilco, and

Mazatlán; perhaps others went as far east as Yucatán. According to Indian tradition, a Toltec ruler named Topiltzin and a number of his associates led the first Toltec invasion of Yucatán. The date has been fixed by some writers at A.D. 987.

Since Topiltzin was a priest of the Fair God Quetzalcoatl, he is oftentimes called Quetzalcoatl. He should not be confused, however, with the "White Bearded God" or Jesus Christ whom the Mexicans called Quetzalcoatl.

Wherever the Toltecs erected temples, they decorated them with quetzal feathers and serpents (rattlesnakes)—symbols of Quetzalcoatl—and adorned their priests with quetzal feathers. These motifs were used extensively on the large pyramid at Tula, which connotes that the people who resided there were worshipers of Quetzalcoatl, who originally was Christ. To quote:

The Toltecs were admirable architects and sculptors. Their constructions, usually in the form of truncated pyramids with space for temples on top, were built of stone and mortar. The giant stone figures at Tula are splendid examples of sculpture. The most frequently used motif was a representation of the chief god, Quetzalcoatl (the plumed serpent). . . .

The majestic statues [at Tula] compete with sculpture of any culture in beauty, size, and purity of style, this latter classic Toltec. Few visitors will forget the impressive anthropomorphic figures that originally served as supports at the entrance of the temples. At the time of their creation, these dignified and simple forms probably had obsidian and mother-of-pearl inserts in the eyes and mouth, as was the custom among pre-conquest peoples in making statues and masks.³⁰

EL TAJIN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ZONE

That afternoon after leaving the archaeological site of Tula, we drove perhaps one hundred miles down to the Gulf of Mexico south of Tampico. We stayed at a small place near Papantla in the state of Vera Cruz, Mexico. One of the greatest cities of ancient America was located not far from the outskirts of the present town of Papantla. The ancient city was called El Tajín.

El Tajín was built by the Totonac (Tō-tō'-nack) Indians. Some writers have maintained that the great pyramids of the sun and moon at Teotihuacán were erected by the Totonacs; others disagree. As always in archaeology, since there is a lack of facts and dates, there is a certain amount of division of opinion among students of

³⁰*Archaeology in Mexico Today, op. cit.*, pp. 16-19.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 58: BEAUTIFUL PYRAMID OF THE NICHES, AT EL TAJIN, VERA CRUZ, MEXICO

ancient cultures. It is maintained, however, that the Totonacs did inhabit the valley of Mexico, including Teotihuacán, at one time. They could have been a branch of the Toltecs. It is believed that the Totonacs were driven out of Mexico Valley by other tribes and eventually settled in the state of Vera Cruz. There they established a number of important cities, as is evidenced by several important archaeological zones situated at various places in that state. “The most important of the Totonac ruins is El Tajín, with its seven-bodies pyramid, ‘The Niches’. . . . The Totonac religion was closely tied up with that of peoples of the valley of Mexico, as can be seen by representations in their temples of the same gods. Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent, is very much present, as are some figures representing Tlaloc [the rain god].”³¹

The famous “Pyramid of the Niches” is one of the most beautiful archaeological structures in the entire Western Hemisphere.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 45.

At one time it formed part of an extensive city. Many foundations of buildings and remains of streets have been found. Numerous large mounds arise from the jungle vegetation in every direction from the "Pyramid of the Niches." Four or five large buildings have been excavated; however, the majority of the mounds are still covered with vegetation.

The great "Pyramid of the Niches" was constructed of volcanic rock and adobe, covered with whitish basalt. Anciently the entire building was stuccoed and painted in various colors, mainly red and green. The four sides of the pyramid represented the four seasons—spring, fall, winter, and summer—and its 365 niches symbolized the days of the year.

A ball court is located at El Tajín, as was the custom throughout ancient America in pre-Columbian times. It was ". . . surrounded by altars with bas-reliefs representing the cult of Quetzalcoatl."³² The ball game "that was played here by the aristocrats of hundreds and maybe thousands of years ago (because ball games were reserved for the privileged classes) was a game of such intense skill that invading Spaniards were amazed at the dexterity of the Mexicans; their conquerors were never capable of competing with the conquered in this."³³

One important Mexican writer, Miguel Covarrubias, is of the opinion that "the builders of El Tajín were the Olmecs, . . . and that they built the ancient city about A.D. 600."³⁴ "And there, too, was evidently Toltec influence in the construction here!" If those opinions are true, and if the Toltecs were originally the Nephites and the Olmecs were originally the Mulekites, the builders of this wonderful ancient civilization at El Tajín would have been direct descendants of Book of Mormon peoples.

We returned from El Tajín to Mexico City, and soon thereafter I traveled by plane to Salt Lake City, completing an intensely interesting six weeks' period of studying the archaeological ruins of Meso-America and the relics in the museums. I accumulated a vast amount of what I consider to be valid Book of Mormon evidence.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 46.

³³*Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

³⁴Cited in *ibid.*, p. 46.

CHAPTER 7

VISITING BONAMPAK AND THE LACANDON INDIANS

CHARLES FREY DISCOVERS BONAMPAK

A dramatic chapter in the story of American archaeology was broadcast to the world by the announcement in 1947 of the discovery of murals depicting dark and light-colored Indians painted on the interior walls of a temple in the southern jungles of Mexico. The Maya name Bonampak (Bo'nam-pak), meaning "painted walls," was given to this archaeological site by a famous archaeologist, the late Dr. Sylvanus G. Morley.¹

A succession of interesting events resulted in the discovery of Bonampak. Approximately fifteen years ago, Charles (Carlos) Frey, a young man in Chicago, decided to get completely away from what we term civilization; and so he left the United States with the hope of finding a spot where he could enjoy peace and contentment with complete freedom from the multitude of worries and problems attached to modern society. In the jungles of the Usumacinta (U-soo-ma-seen'ta) River Basin near the southern borders of Mexico, he joined a group of Mayas, the Lacandón (Lack'an-dōn) Indians, who were living under very primitive conditions.² He married one of their women and made his home with them. He concluded that he had found solitude, peace, and contentment which would supply the type of life for which he had been searching. Here was his earthly paradise; and so he planned to remain with the Lacandóns permanently.

While living with the Indians, he observed that occasionally the men suddenly disappeared for a few days without letting him know where they were going, leaving him at home with the women. He tried time and time again to induce them to tell him where they went and to take him with them, but he continually failed in both endeavors. Finally he went to Mexico City and purchased a small record player. When he returned to his Lacandón friends, they

¹Sylvanus G. Morley, *The Ancient Maya* (Palo Alto, Calif., 1947), p. 415.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 208, 381, 410.

were amazed to hear voices and music. They were completely intrigued by this wonderful new marvel.

After Mr. Frey had whetted their desires for ownership, he told them that they could have the record player if the next time they went into the jungles they would take him to the place they frequently visited. Since by this time he had lived with them for a few years, Charles Frey had won the confidence of the Indians. Finally as a result of much persuasion in addition to the gift of the record player, the Lacandón Indians told him about Bonampak, situated some sixteen miles from their jungle-huts on the Lacanhá (Lacón'há) River, and then they guided Mr. Frey to the "Temple of the Painted Walls" which contained unusual Maya murals. These he examined with deep interest, recognizing that he had made an important archaeological discovery. Soon after Frey's trip to Bonampak, he went to Mexico City and reported his discovery.

BONAMPAK A RELIGIOUS SHRINE

Charles Frey found that Bonampak was a religious shrine venerated by the Lacandón Indians. It had been used during ages past by their ancestors for worshiping purposes, and the modern Indians continued the practice. The men of the Lacandón tribe made periodical trips to this ancient temple at Bonampak for the purpose of engaging in their pagan practices, worshiping their gods there as their ancestors had done throughout the centuries before them. The women, however, were not allowed to participate in these religious ceremonies; in fact, they were not even permitted to visit the ancient shrine.

A number of articles have appeared during the past several years describing Bonampak—its location, its use as a religious shrine, and the Lacandón Indians. In a 1955 publication of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, entitled *Ancient Mayan Paintings of Bonampak, Mexico*, the following description of the location of this archaeological site is given:

Bonampak lies in the northeastern corner of the state of Chiapas (Cheep'us) in southeastern Mexico, in the valley of the Lacanhá River. . . .

The area has no permanent inhabitants except for a handful of Maya Indians, known as Lacandón, the only surviving pagan Maya. A dozen of them live on the banks of the Cedro (Say'-drō) River, a few miles from Bonampak, and still make pilgrimages to the ruins of the great Maya city of

Yaxchilán (Yāsh'chē-lon) and to Bonampak to offer prayers and burn incense in the temples of their ancestors. On the floors of those buildings they leave their incense burners, reminders to us of a great past. There are other tiny settlements of Lacandón in the great forests of Chiapas, but they are rapidly approaching extinction.³

GILES G. HEALEY DISCOVERS BONAMPAK

In addition to Charles Frey, who visited Bonampak in 1946, another American, Giles G. Healey, was taken that same year to see the murals by one of the local Lacandón Indians whose friendship he had won. Many writers have credited Healey with the discovery of the "Temple of the Painted Walls." In regards to Healey's discovery, the writer of the publication of the Carnegie Institution stated:

. . . His astonishment can be imagined, since never before had a structure with rooms entirely covered with murals been found in the Maya area. Despite the layers of lime (deposited by moisture trickling down from the limestone roof) which veiled some of their brilliance, Healey realized that he had discovered scenes which would greatly increase our knowledge of lay life among the Maya and, perhaps of more importance, would add a great treasure to surviving New World art. These are not the first murals to be discovered but they are of far greater interest than any previously known.⁴

REPRODUCTIONS MADE OF THE MURALS

Soon thereafter Giles Healey reported the discovery to the proper authorities in Mexico City and also to the Carnegie Institution of Washington. With the permission of the *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia de Mexico*, the Carnegie Institution arranged for Sr. Antonio Tejada Fonseca, a well-known Guatemalan artist, to accompany Mr. Healey on his return visit to the "Temple of the Painted Walls." In the short time that they were there, Tejada (Tay-hay'-dá) copied certain portions of the paintings and made a rather complete report regarding their extent, state of preservation, and subject matter. As a result of the report the Carnegie Institution decided that "it was almost imperative to send a fully equipped expedition to copy and photograph the paintings in all the rooms."⁵

In accordance with this decision, an expedition was financed by the United Fruit Company and directed by the Carnegie Insti-

³*Ancient Maya Paintings of Bonampak, Mexico*, Supplementary Publication 46 (1955), Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D. C., p. 3.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 5.

tution in collaboration with the *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia de México*. The exhibition spent three months' time at the site in the spring of 1947 and a shorter period in the spring of 1948. On these two trips to Bonampak, Tejeda was able to finish copying all the paintings. The Mexican *Instituto* also sent its artist, Sr. Agustín Villagra Caletí to make a second set of copies. These two outstanding artists worked faithfully together reproducing the murals until the work was completed. They were both unusually well-qualified to do the work. Tejeda had previously copied murals at Uaxactún and designs on Maya pottery, often in a fresco technique similar to that of the murals, and Villagra had copied many murals at Teotihuacán and Monte Alban.

As previously mentioned, the murals were partly obscured by water having leaked through the roof of the building, leaving lime deposits on the murals. It was found that applications of kerosene to the wall-surface made this heavy layer of lime temporarily transparent and, of course, that it did no harm to the underlying paintings. This discovery greatly aided the artists in reproducing the murals accurately and caused the colors in the paintings to show up more distinctly in the photographs. Thus the ancient Maya murals were preserved by modern artists as accurately and perfectly as was humanly possible. Reproductions of the murals are found in the museums in Mexico City and in Guatemala City.

ANCIENT CITY OF BONAMPAK

While the artists copied the murals, archaeologists who had accompanied them surveyed the site. They found that Bonampak was not one of the larger of the ancient Mayan cities; but they concluded that perhaps in a cultural sense it had been of significance in ancient times and that in a political sense it had been a dependency of Yaxchilán, an important archaeological site situated in a loop of the Usumacinta River approximately twenty miles to the northwest.

Soon after the artists and archaeologists had completed their work at Bonampak, articles appeared in archaeological magazines giving thorough descriptions of the ancient city with its "Temple of the Painted Walls." These articles were illustrated by reproductions of the ancient, unusual murals.

Some archaeologists have made the claim that the murals were painted about A.D. 600 while other writers have suggested later dates. The date 600 would be only 180 years after Moroni completed the Book of Mormon records and hid them for future generations. In fact, certain archaeologists have indicated that the city of Bonampak was perhaps settled a few centuries prior to A.D. 600, which if correct would place the city in Book of Mormon times. According to the Carnegie Institution, the following conclusion has been reached:

. . . The stylistic evidence of the sculptures and the dates recorded in the hieroglyphic inscriptions indicate that the city flourished from about A.D. 600 to about 825. However, a better sample of pottery would probably show the site to have been occupied for two or three centuries prior to 600, but almost certainly would not advance the date of its abandonment by more than a few decades, if at all.⁶

Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson, one of America's outstanding archaeologists, published four illustrations from Bonampak in his most recent book. One was an incised panel showing three men making offerings to a personage seated on a dais. Dr. Thompson wrote: The "style is early, perhaps about A.D. 600."⁷ He reproduced a section of the Bonampak murals which he interpreted as a "raid on the enemy" and another section which he stated represented a scene of "judgment on the captives." He dated these scenes about A.D. 775.⁸ Later in his book he reproduced another portion of the Bonampak murals which he dated about A.D. 800.⁹

BEGINNING OF JOURNEY TO BONAMPAK

When I read the articles written by the archaeologists and examined the reproductions of the murals from the walls of the temple at Bonampak, observing that some of the people represented in the murals were white in color and others were red or darker colored, I secretly and hopefully longed to visit Bonampak. I desired to go there and examine this marvelous discovery which could provide valuable evidence in helping to confirm the claims made by the Book of Mormon that there were dark and light-colored people in ancient America. At that time, however, my chance to go

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁷J. Eric S. Thompson, *The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization* (Norman, Okla., 1954), Plate 10a.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 78, 83.

⁹*Ibid.*, Plate 17b.

there seemed remote; but now rather unexpectedly I received the opportunity to see the temple with the murals as part of the trip of visiting archaeological ruins. On the morning of January 18, 1955, Otto Done, a photographer working for the Church, José Dávila, a Mexican guide and former branch president at Puebla, and I got off the train at Tenosique (Tay-no-see'kay), Tabasco (Tà-bass'cō), Mexico, at 5:30 a.m. We had ridden all night without sleep, the train having been crowded and the temperature hot. The previous day we had begun our travels at 4:00 a.m., and so by the time we arrived at Tenosique to make preparations to start the trip into the jungles we were already tired.

While we waited for daylight to come, we secured our breakfast in a small cafe at the railroad station. Here also we purchased two or three small cans of Vienna sausages and a few boiled eggs, the only food we took into the jungles, since it was too early in the morning for a grocery store to be open. While we were eating breakfast an experience occurred which is typical of the customs of our neighboring people to the south, although quite unusual and thereby interesting to us from the United States. We were sitting at a table when suddenly a rooster crowed loudly several times. It sounded as if it were practically under our table—and we soon found that it was. A woman came out of the kitchen and approached a box which was lying on the floor only two or three feet from our table. The box was turned upside down. She lifted it up and from underneath it took a turkey and a rooster. Each of them had a string tied on one of its legs. The woman carried them out through the back door of the cafe and tied them to the doorpost. We concluded that those unlucky fowl would constitute the bill-of-fare at the cafe that day.

As soon as daylight came, we hired the owner of a small plane to fly us to an airstrip in the jungles near Bonampak which had been cut for the use of workers in the *chicle* (chik'lē) industry which provides the substance from which chewing gum is made. During the rainy season, which occurs from May until October, chewing-gum gatherers, called *chicleros* (shee-clay'ros), extract the sap of the *sapodilla* (sap-ō-dil'á) trees for conversion into *chicle*, which the raw gum is called.

As we flew over the tropical jungles toward Bonampak, the fleecy-like, white clouds hovered over the dense vegetation of what

seemed to be a never-ending forest. The air was fresh and exhilarating. We gazed out of the plane at the clouds below us. Occasionally an opening appeared amidst them, which made it possible for us to see the green vegetation of the vast forest over which we were flying. We thrilled as we beheld the beauty of God's creation, feeling almost as if we were flying through a strange fairyland. The photograph taken from the plane will give the reader a certain amount of appreciation of the beauty of the entire scene which we keenly enjoyed while on our flight to Bonampak.



Airplane view of jungles and clouds, shortly before arriving at El Cedro airstrip sixteen miles from Bonampak.

—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 59: AIRPLANE VIEW OF JUNGLES AND CLOUDS, SOUTHEASTERN MEXICO

While we were flying to Bonampak, our pilot informed us that there were only a few tiny settlements of Lacandón Indians scattered throughout the vast forest of the state of Chiapas. The race was rapidly approaching extinction; however, a small group of them lived near the airstrip on which we would land. Perhaps we could secure their services as guides to take us to Bonampak.

By 10:00 o'clock we had flown over the jungles of Mexico nearly to the extreme southeastern limits of that country and had landed on the airstrip cut by the *chicleros*. As the plane touched the ground a flock of wild turkeys flew out of the tall grass which completely covered the rough, dirt runway.

The small airstrip was called El Cedro, since it was near the river which bears that name. The clearing appeared to be exceedingly minute in comparison with the extensive jungles which surrounded it; in fact, in comparison with the vast jungles it appeared—especially from the air—to be only a small ribbon-like opening in the profuse vegetation. As we gazed around us, looking as far as we could toward the horizon, all we could see were trees, bushes, vines, tall grass on the airstrip, and more trees. There was no doubt in our minds that we were now really in the jungles.

After the plane landed, we went a short distance from the airstrip on a trail which led to the Lacandón camp, which to our dismay had been abandoned. The Indians had moved to some other location. Somewhat disheartened we walked back to the airplane, and the aviator told us: "You men are crazy if you attempt to hike to Bonampak. You don't stand a chance in the world of getting out of these vast jungles alive. The vegetation is so dense that you are sure to get lost."

Somewhat distressed and with a feeling of disappointment creeping over us, my two companions and I exchanged glances, and then one of them said: "Let's get back in the plane and go back to civilization. It isn't so important that we visit Bonampak."

I could not think of giving up the attainment of a long hoped-for goal now that it was so nearly within my grasp. We discussed the problem for a few moments and decided to put our trust in the Lord and continue our journey to Bonampak. We sincerely believed that the Lord would protect us and bring us back to civilization in safety and in good condition.

When our pilot heard our decision, he said: "I still think you are fools if you insist on going. But if you go and if you get lost, you won't be the first nor the last ones. Recently an American was lost in these jungles for fifteen days. When he was finally discovered by the Lacandón Indians, he was delirious as a result of malaria fever. He was really in a serious condition."

I have learned since that conversation occurred that the American who was lost was Robert Bruce, a young man from Oklahoma. He visited me in Salt Lake City nearly a year after my return home. He informed me that he was lost nine days instead of fifteen, and that he was out of his head at times as a result of a bad case of

malaria. It was he who graciously supplied me with a number of photographs of the Lacandón Indians to publish in this book. I express deep gratitude to him for so kindly allowing me the privilege of publishing them.

In spite of our pilot's efforts to discourage us, we were still determined to go to Bonampak. "If you still insist on going," he said, raising his hand and pointing, "there is your trail leading out of the southern end of the airstrip. Bonampak lies some sixteen miles southeast of here in the valley of the Lacanhá River, so I have been told. That river is a tributary of the Rio Usumacinta." And then the pilot turned and climbed into his plane. As he did so, he muttered, "I still think you are three very foolish men."

We arranged with the aviator to meet us at the airstrip two days hence at 10:00 a.m., waved as he flew away, and then with high anticipation in our hearts commenced hiking along a very indistinct and difficult jungle trail.

TROPICAL JUNGLES

We had not hiked far along the trail before we thoroughly understood the pilot's warning regarding tropical jungles. We were now in one of the most densely wooded regions in the world, a country of heavy rainfall and dense tropical forest.

"Many varieties of palms, giant mahogany trees, Spanish cedars, and the sapodilla, which yields the raw material of chewing gum, abound. Everywhere lianas twist from trunk to trunk; innumerable parasitic plants are lodged in the forks of the larger trees. It is the land of the tapir, the peccary, the monkey, and the parrot. The largest mammal is the seldom seen jaguar, whose skin was an emblem of chieftainship among the ancient Maya."¹⁰

Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson, one of America's outstanding archaeologists and authorities of the Mayas, described the jungle as follows:

... It is an undulating land of vast tropical forest, with trees up to 150 feet high, interspersed with large swamps. To an observer without botanical training the outstanding features are the single mahogany trees scattered through the forest, the Spanish cedar, the giant ceiba, sacred to the Maya, many varieties of palms, and the sapodilla, from which chicle (the raw product of chewing gum) is bled. Typical, also, are the bread-nut tree (not

¹⁰*Ancient Maya Paintings of Bonampak, Mexico*. Supplementary Publication 46 (1955), Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D. C., p. 3.

to be confused with the bread-fruit tree, but an important source of food for man and beast), occasional rubber trees and vanilla vines, and incredible numbers of aerial plants, bromeliaceae and lianas. Flowers there are, but for the most part they are hardly visible, far above one's head in the treetops. . . .¹¹

We observed thousands of orchid plants high up in the forks of trees, but only a few of them had blossomed. They would be a spectacle to behold when in full bloom.¹²

RESCUED BY THE LACANDONS

As we made our way through the dense jungles hoping that we were still on the trail, we became fully aware that we were in a wild, thickly vegetated country where there were no civilized people and no laws to govern the few primitive Lacandóns who lived there. Nevertheless we hoped that we would be fortunate enough to run across some of those Indians.

After approximately one hour's time had passed and we had almost reached the conclusion that we were lost, we met some Indians on the trail. They were Lacandóns, members of El Cedro clan whom we had endeavored to locate near the airstrip. They readily consented to be our guides. If such good fortune had not come our way, it is possible that we might have spent the remainder of our days in the jungles of southeastern Mexico.

Our rescuers consisted of two Indian women and a boy, the latter whom we estimated to be approximately fifteen years old. They, having heard our plane, had left their home and hurried down the jungle trail to meet us. These interesting natives were very small people, perhaps the smallest that I have ever seen. The women were less than four and one-half feet tall, and the boy was even shorter. All three of them had long black hair, parted in the middle, which hung loosely over their shoulders. We observed that they had difficulty in keeping their hair from hanging over their faces and thereby restricting their vision. Both of the women as well as the boy were wearing loose robes which hung to their ankles, all three being dressed exactly alike. Their robes were made from cloth in texture and appearance similar to that from which we make tents. I can most aptly describe the cloth by calling it canvas.

¹¹Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹²Note: When one travels through the towns in Central America, he sees hibiscus, oleander, and the brilliant bougainvillea everywhere, but these are marks of civilization; they do not grow in the forest.

My biggest surprise was to observe that the skin of one of the women was very white, just as white as the skin of our women. The other woman and the boy had merely a tinge of color in their skins, they being also practically white. For many years I had heard of white Indians, and now in the southeastern jungles of Mexico I had the privilege of seeing some.

The native language of these people was Maya, but they had learned some Spanish from *chicle* workers, and so Otto and José conversed with them in Spanish.

Although these Indians were very primitive in their mode of living, I soon found that they learned quickly. My companions called me President Hunter. Almost immediately these little jungle people called me "President Hunter" in English, speaking as plainly as if they had known the language all their lives. And they did not forget that that was what I was called.

Fig. 60: LACANDONS ON JUNGLE TRAIL

The Lacandón Indians who met our party on the jungle trail and guided us to their *casa*. Left to right: Chan Kim, fifteen-year-old boy; Maria and Carmita, wives of Carranza. Observe the whiteness of Maria's skin.

—Photograph by Author



One of the Indian women said that her name was Maria, and the other was Carmita. The boy claimed to have no name, but I learned later that that was merely his idea of humor. His name was Chan Kim.

After proper introductions had been made, the Indian women announced that they were the former wives of an Indian named Carranza who recently had been shot through the head and killed by another member of their tribe named Obregon. This news increased our apprehension greatly. Here we were miles and miles from civilization, with no law enforcement officers nor laws to protect us, and suddenly we were informed that the Indians of this region killed each other if they so desired. With concern we asked, "Why did Obregon shoot Carranza?"

The reply was, "Because Obregon was *loco* in the head."

The thought suddenly came into my mind, "I hope that we three are not Obregon's next victims." Despite this note of tragedy, we were very thankful to have these three Indians as our guides; and so, continuing to place our trust in the Lord for protection, we proceeded onward along an almost impossible jungle trail which I shall attempt to describe later.

After our Indian guides had been with us for a short time, we came to a spot where the vegetation was sufficiently open to let the light of the sun come through. I took advantage of the opportunity and photographed the two women and boy. Even with a casual glance at this photograph, one can see how white those Indians were, especially the one woman.

THE LACANDON INDIANS

We toiled through the jungles for approximately another hour after the Indian women and boy met us when finally we came to a clearing in the forest. The trees had been burned from a few acres of land upon which the Indians raised their garden products. Most of the patch had been planted to corn, and the dry corn stalks, with the ears of corn attached, were still standing. At the edge of the clearing, we were greeted by a pack of skinny, mongrel dogs who barked and yelped as we followed our Indian guides into the center of the clearing to their two thatched houses. We had now arrived at the Indians' *casa* or home.



—Photograph by Jose Davila

Fig. 61: LACANDONS EXAMINING PHOTOGRAPHS OF THEMSELVES

Lacandón Indians at NaBor's thatched *casa*. Left to right: Maria, second wife of Carranza; Juan, grown son of NaBor; Chan Kim, stepson of NaBor; one of Juan's wives; Carnita, first wife of Carranza; NaBor; Cubano, a boy about fifteen years old.

Soon we were surrounded by a number of little jungle people, all of whom seemed to be duplicates of our three guides. They were as curious as a group of little children. Few times in their lives had they seen men of another race from outside their little world. They tugged and pulled at everything we were carrying with the hope of seeing what we had brought into the jungles. They asked a thousand questions regarding everything that we had in our luggage, even inspecting carefully the clothing we were wearing.

There were several women, one small baby, two boys about fifteen years of age, and—we were informed—two men who constituted the membership of this Lacandón clan. The men, however, were not at home when we first arrived. There were really two families living side by side, a father and his son being the heads of the families. Some of the women were the wives of one of the men and the others the wives of the other.

Since there were only two boys approximately fifteen years of age and one small baby in those two families with probably eight women, it was apparent that the infant mortality is very high. The Lacandóns are a vanquishing race, due to the prevalence of malaria, hookworm, and dysentery.¹³ The late Dr. Sylvanus Morley maintained that there were approximately 200 of them scattered in small groups throughout the jungles.¹⁴

We observed that, like the Indian women and boy whom we had met on the trail, all of the Lacandón Indians were very small in stature. The men were approximately four and one-half to five feet tall and the women approximately six inches shorter. The majority of them had black hair. Also, the men, like the women, parted their hair in the middle, permitting it to grow long and fall loosely around their faces and down their backs. They pushed it back from each side of their faces, but did not succeed in keeping it from hanging over their eyes. Their hair had the appearance of seldom having been combed and rarely if ever having been washed.

As we associated with these two families of Lacandón Indians and met two other families later that day, the one thing which impressed me most about them was the whiteness of their skin. One of the women actually had red hair, and her skin was just as white as ours. An Indian man named José Pepé, the religious reader of the Cedro clan of Lacandóns, whom we met later that day, also had red hair and white skin. As previously mentioned, one of the women who first met us on the trail had dark hair, but her skin was as white as that of any of our women. The color of all the others whom we saw ranged from white to a slightly darker cast. The skin color of the darkest among them was no darker than mine, since I had a sun tan at that time.

While visiting in Guatemala approximately three weeks before our trip to Bonampak, I was informed by an official guide that, generally speaking, the Quiché Maya Indians of Guatemala were nearly white, but that there was another tribe of Indians—a primitive, wild people, living in the jungles of southern Mexico, known as Lacandóns—who were really white. The guide claimed to have seen two boys who had been flown out of the jungle to Guatemala City and then returned to their homes. When I received this in-

¹³Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹⁴Morley, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

formation, I had no idea that I would have the privilege of associating for nearly three days with the latter people, but suddenly and unexpectedly we found ourselves being entertained by them.

As I observed those primitive jungle natives, noting that many of them had such white skin, I recalled that the Book of Mormon claimed that in ancient times the Nephites were “a white and delightful people.”¹⁵ And then I thought: “Although the Lacandóns are quite white in color, they certainly have degenerated greatly from the high cultural standards of their predecessors of Book of



A Lacandón woman with white skin and red hair. She was the mother of a small baby. We were interested in the whiteness of its skin.

—*Photograph by Author*

Fig. 62: WHITE LACANDON WOMAN WITH RED HAIR

Mormon days, especially from the cultural status of the Nephites when they were living in harmony with the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” The predictions of the ancient prophets to the Nephites and Lamanites—the ancestors of the Lacandóns—came flooding through my mind. I recalled that the Lord had declared to the Nephites through a number of his prophets that when that people rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ and became seeped in wickedness their nation would be destroyed. A remnant of

¹⁵² Nephi 30:6.

those ancient white people, however, would be scattered among their darker-skinned brethren, the Lamanites. I recalled that toward the close of the final wars of those ancient peoples, Mormon, a prophet of God and the leader of the Nephite nation, wrote the following regarding his people:

They were once a delightsome people, and they had Christ for their shepherd; yea, they were led even by God the Father,

But now, behold, they are led about by Satan, even as chaff is driven before the wind, or as a vessel is tossed about upon the waves, without sail or anchor, . . .

. . . the seed of this people . . . shall become scattered, and shall become . . . a filthy, and a loathsome people, beyond the description of that which ever hath been amongst us, yea, even that which hath been among the Lamanites, and this because of their unbelief and idolatry.¹⁶

As I looked at these primitive Indians, I thought: "Here is a remnant of that ancient, proud, intelligent, highly cultured, and mighty race—the Nephites—which rejected their God and his gospel plan of salvation and then they were rejected by him. These primitive Lacandóns, their descendants, are certainly a degenerate people, living under slightly better conditions than the animals of the jungles."

The oldest woman of the group, whom the Lacandóns called "Old Rosita" or "Grandma," invited us into their two small, thatched houses. We observed their homes had dirt floors. There was practically a total lack of furniture; however, they did possess a small amount of crude, handmade pottery, a few dishes made primarily out of gourds, and a grinder used for grinding corn. It appeared that the entire family either cuddled together at nighttime on a little fiber mat which lay near one wall or slept in hammocks. We observed that they had two or three hammocks in which to lounge or rock their babies.

Their extremely primitive life and their poverty touched our hearts, and so we gave them all the small articles that were in our pockets and regretted that we hadn't more to give; for example, shortly after our arrival I gave a wooden clothespin to "Old Rosita" or "Grandma." I showed her that she could pinch her dress together with it. She was as delighted as any child would have been with a shiny new toy; and two days later when we left the Lacandóns' *casas*,

¹⁶Mormon 5:17-18, 15.

she was still holding it in her hand. Also, soon after we first met him, I gave Chan Kim, our boy-guide, the yellow box from which I had taken my camera film. He also clutched his gift in his hand throughout the entire time that we were with them. Otto Done gave one of the women his pocket comb. I broke my comb into two pieces in order to supply two of the women with combs. The other boy, whose name was Cubano, looked wistfully at an empty pill bottle which I was about to throw away. I gave it to him and can honestly say that I have never seen a person receive a gift with more joy. When we first arrived José Dávila gave the women a bar of soap. He took some of them to the stream of water and showed them how to use the soap, even suggesting that they could wash their hair if they so desired. We decided, however, that they would not become that venturesome.

Before our final departure from these Indians, we gave them the remainder of the presents we had brought into the jungles to pay them for serving as our guides and to reward them for their hospitality. The gifts consisted of such items as pocketknives, flashlight batteries, salt, and several boxes of bullets. These primitive folk were highly pleased and as happy as a group of children on Christmas morning.

We were very anxious to continue our journey to the "Temple of the Painted Walls." Shortly after arriving at the Indians' *casas* we asked the two boys of that clan—Chan Kim, our former guide, and Cubano—and the two women who had guided us there to continue on to Bonampak, not knowing that the women were not permitted to visit the sacred shrine. They declined, stating that the two men of that particular household probably would go with us if we would wait until they returned from hunting birds. Naturally to wait was our only choice; however, this afforded us an unusual opportunity to study the Lacandón Indians.

While waiting for the men to return from hunting, Otto Done, using a minute camera, took photographs of the Indians. They beheld their own likeness with astonishment, each one exclaiming, "Who is this?" when shown his own likeness. This seemed to be a new experience for them. They were a simple, childlike, primitive people. Two of the photographs show these Indians studying a photograph of themselves. Observe how intensely interested they were, and also observe the height of the Lacandóns. The writer is

only five feet and eight and one-half inches high while José Dávila is about five feet and five inches. The tallest of those Indians came about to our shoulders.

While we waited for the men to return from hunting, we had ample opportunity to observe the Indians carefully, their possessions, their homes, and mode of living. In addition to their twelve dogs (I counted them), we observed that this small group of La-



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 63: LACANDONS, JOSE DAVILA, AND THE AUTHOR

Lacandón women observing photographs of themselves. Observe the height of the Indians. From left to right: Milton R. Hunter, María, Carnita, Juan's wife, José Dávila, "Grandma."

candóns had a herd of goats, a flock of chickens, several turkeys, a number of pigs, and a pair of parrots. The parrots perched hour after hour in one of the trees near their two thatched houses.

JOURNEY CONTINUED TOWARD BONAMPAK

We waited for more than an hour for the men to return. Finally two little Lacandóns emerged from the jungles into the clearing and made their way along a trail among the corn stalks toward their *casas*. They were dressed in the usual type of canvas-like robes and both of them were barefooted, as were all of the other Lacandóns



Fig. 64: LACANDON INDIANS EATING DINNER BEFORE THE DEPARTURE FOR BONAMPAK

Left to right: "Old Rosita" or "Grandma," first wife of NaBor; one of Juan's wives; NaBor seated in hammock.

whom we had met. Each of them was carrying a gun, and one was puffing a big, homemade cigar. It struck me as rather peculiar to see that jungle native smoking a cigar as large as any that could be purchased in the United States.

They cordially exchanged greetings with us. One of the men was much older than the other. He had a thin growth of hair on his upper lip while the face of the other was as free from hair as was that of any of their women. The older one—father of the other man—announced his name to be NaBor (Na-bore') and that of his son to be Juánito (Wahn-ee'to) (Little John). We called the son Juan (Wahn).

We asked them to guide us to Bonampak. They readily consented to do so on condition that we wait while they ate their dinner. When the meal was served, all the family members took turns drinking gruel, or thin cornmeal mush, out of a large bowl. I was happy that they didn't offer me a turn.

The food having been consumed, Otto, José, and I, accompanied by NaBor and Juan, our guides, left the Indians' homes and continued our journey along the jungle trail toward the "Temple of the Painted Walls." As it had been heretofore, the trail was extremely difficult. The steaming heat was oppressive; and, to add to our discomfort, our Lacandón guides hiked very fast. It was all we could do to stay in sight of them as they made their way through the jungles.

JOSE PEPE AND FAMILY

After we had plodded along for approximately two hours' time, the trail led into another cultivated spot on which stood dry corn stalks. Other garden products were also growing there. At the edge of the clearing, we were met by a pack of barking dogs, such as we had encountered at NaBor's domicile. A picturesque thatched hut with an attached open-air thatched bowery stood on the banks of a majestic river, the Lacanhá. This stream of water was several times larger than El Cedro which ran by NaBor's *casa*. The thatched house and bowery in this clearing was the home of José Pepé (the other white Indian with red hair previously mentioned) and family.

As we walked toward his *casa*, José Pepé arose from where he had been reclining under the bowery and came to meet us. He was a small man, only four feet eight inches in height. He extended his right hand and greeted us very cordially while he held a cigar in the other hand. NaBor informed us that this man was the religious leader of El Cedro clan of Lacandóns.

After proper introductions had been made, José Pepé invited us to go with him into the shade of the bowery. While he and NaBor engaged in conversation in the Maya language, presumably regarding us and our trip to Bonampak, I carefully observed his family and home. Two of his wives were rocking small babies in hammocks

which hung under the bowery. Another woman was busily engaged in grinding corn for their *tortillas* (tor-tee'yä).¹⁷

We requested this family to permit us to take their pictures. José Pepé, with one of his wives and baby, courteously responded. One woman of his household refused to pose for the picture, saying, "No, I haven't a pretty dress." I wondered what made her have



José Pepé, a white Lacandón with red hair, with his wife and baby. José is the brother-in-law of Carlos Frey, one of the discoverers of Bonampak.

—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 65: JOSE PEPE, HIS WIFE AND BABY

such unusual ideas, since her dress was made of canvas and appeared exactly like the dresses worn by the other Lacandón Indians. The following day upon inquiry we learned from NaBor that this Indian woman had been the wife of the late Carlos Frey, one of the Amer-

¹⁷Tortillas are made of ground corn mixed into a batter with water and cooked on a flat, earthenware grill. In appearance they are like our pancakes. In addition to beans, tortillas are perhaps the most extensively used food in Mexico and Central America.

ican discoverers of Bonampak. He had probably clothed her in a dress of finer weave, possibly from Mexico City.

Approximately two years before our visit to Bonampak, Carlos Frey had been guiding a group of Mexican artists to the "Temple of the Painted Walls," beginning a second trip there. While they were crossing the river about a mile below José Pepé's home, the boat capsized, drowning Mr. Frey and one of the Mexicans. They were buried approximately a mile downstream from José Pepé's home.

I observed that this family of Lacandóns also possessed a few goats, some pigs, a number of chickens and turkeys, as did NaBor's family; and of course their garden products were similar.

The Lacanhá River was wide and deep; and we needed a boat in which to cross it. This we borrowed from José Pepé. He had made the boat by hollowing out a log with his machete (*mä-chä'tā*). This would have been a laborious task. Since the boat was made from only one log, it was the type and shape that could be easily overturned in the river. We were told that it was similar to the one in which Carlos Frey and his friends had attempted to cross this same river when the boat capsized, resulting in the death of Frey and one of his companions.

We left Pepé's clearing, and Juan paddled us across the Lacanhá. José Dávila and I were taken across first. We sat quietly toward the rear of the boat, a little fearful of capsizing it, while Juan stood erect toward the front and with one oar or pole paddled and guided the boat across the stream. Then he returned for Otto Done and NaBor. As they were crossing the river, I gazed upon the thatched house, the garden spot surrounded on three sides by dense vegetation, the towering trees, parrots with bright-colored plumage flying among the branches, and the majestic river, bordering the other side of Pepé's clearing. I concluded that I had never seen a more beautiful spot. It was indeed an earthly paradise.

When our entire party were across the river, Juan fastened the boat securely to a tree which stood adjacent to the stream, leaving it there so we could cross the river in it on our return from Bonampak.

The photograph shows Juan navigating José and the writer across the Lacanhá River. I suggest that the readers observe the



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 66: CROSSING THE LACANHA RIVER

Juan paddling José Dávila and the author across the Lacanhá River in José Pepé's boat. We were on our way to Bonampak. Observe the thatched hut, a typical Lacandón home.

typical Lacandón thatched hut near the river bank, and the thick jungle vegetation shown on the photograph.

AN EXPERIENCE WITH OBREGON

After leaving José Pepé's clearing and continuing our journey along an extremely difficult jungle trail for perhaps an hour's time, suddenly our guides stopped, sat down beside the trail, and the older man said: "We are not going any farther. We are returning home. Obregon's *casa* is a short distance from here. He will guide you to Bonampak. We do not want to see him."

The thought that Obregon was a murderer was uppermost in our minds, and so we had no more desire to see him than had our

Indian guides. We replied: "We have hired you, not Obregon, to take us to Bonampak, and you must do it; otherwise you will receive no gifts."

Our Indian guides sat beside the trail for perhaps thirty minutes while we used every argument at our command in our efforts to convince them to continue on to Bonampak with us. For some time it appeared that our arguments would result in failure. Finally, after we had used the best salesmanship of which we were capable, and had given the Indians a box of bullets, they consented to continue with us on condition that we would not permit Obregon to join our party. We assured them that we would not; in fact, we were as definitely opposed to having him accompany us as they were, remembering that he had recently killed Carranza.

Once again we trudged along the trail. Soon thereafter we came into a small opening in the jungle, and there in front of us stood two thatched huts. Obregon—a naked fellow except for his breechcloth—was lounging on the ground in the shade of a bowery, while his wives were doing the work. His dogs barked viciously at our approach, evidently having taken on part of the spirit of their master. Upon seeing us, Obregon immediately jumped to his feet and ran to meet us, throwing his arms around me and giving me a firm caress. A chill went up and down my spine as I recalled that this man was a murderer. I was much relieved when he withdrew his arms, and I found that he had no knife in his hand. My desire was to get out of the company of this aggressive Indian as soon as possible. He asked, "Where are you going?"

We replied, "To Bonampak."

He answered, "I will go with you."

With firm determination, we stated, "No, you cannot accompany us to Bonampak."

Then he inquired, "Why not?"

To that we responded, "Because we have engaged these Indians to go with us."

Then he asked, "What presents did you bring?"

"We didn't bring you any presents," was our reply.

"Did you bring these men presents?"



Courtesy of Robert Bruce

—Photograph by Barbara Sykes

Fig. 67: LACANDON INDIANS IN OBREGON'S HOUSE

Lacandón men sitting in Obregon's house and talking while the women prepare dinner. They are: NaBor (left), Obregon (center sitting in hammock), Obregon's son (sitting by his father), Kayum and José Pepé.

We told him that we had given them a few articles to pay for their guiding us to the ruins.

He reverted again to the subject of going to Bonampak, still insisting on coming along also. We flatly told him that we did not want him to accompany us. It took all of the persuasion we could muster to convince him. Finally he relented by inviting us to come to his home on our return journey and "write our names and addresses in his big book." It was obvious that his principal purpose was to provide another opportunity to try to get some gifts from us.

JUNGLE TRAILS

As quickly as we could get away from Obregon, we continued our journey toward Bonampak. The trail was still as difficult as it had been from the time we left El Cedro airstrip. Never in my life before making this trip had I known what jungles and jungle trails

really were. What a trail! I had been in forests in Alaska, in Canada, in Newfoundland, and in various parts of the United States, but never before had I seen vegetation so dense. The trees of numerous varieties, towering from one hundred to one hundred fifty feet upward and growing closely together, were interwoven with vines and lianas of various kinds. These not only climbed the trees from the ground to their tops, but also grew crosswise from tree to tree making the vegetation practically a solid hedge. We observed that certain varieties of plants, such as philodendrons, which are grown as house plants in our homes, climbed one hundred feet to the tops of the trees and then many of them hung downward from the treetops to the ground. Words are inadequate to describe the density and beauty of the tropical jungles of southern Mexico and northern Guatemala.

Occasionally vines grew across the trail only four or five feet from the ground. This necessitated a lot of stooping on our part, especially in the case of Otto Done who is six feet two inches tall. Because of the masses of leaves which were packed on the ground, the trail at times was extremely difficult to distinguish. We could have gone one direction almost as easily as another and still thought we were on the trail.

The tropical vegetation was so dense, regardless of how brightly the sun shone in the heavens, that it seemed practically dusk throughout the entire course of our journey. The heat was intense and the humidity high. I was unable to wear my glasses at all while in the jungles.

As we plodded along the jungle trail, it seemed as if every vine reached out and grabbed hold of our feet, tripping us over. It was really laughable to see how many times each of us fell down, but our Indian guides never stumbled. They were expert woodsmen, as agile as the jaguars which were native to their jungles.

My first really exciting fall occurred shortly after the Indians had joined us. We were attempting to cross a stream on a log covered with slick, green moss, beautiful to look at but difficult to walk on. When I reached the middle of the stream, my feet slipped, and I fell into the water. I held both cameras high out of the water while I struggled to my feet and out of the stream. How the Indians laughed! That mishap furnished them the most fun they experienced while we were with them.

Our progress was made more difficult in certain places by swampy, muddy trails, in which we sank ankle-deep; and in other places our trail was blocked by logs which had fallen on top of each other and were lying stretched across the trail. If it so happened that there was a hole large enough underneath the logs to squeeze through, the Indians dropped on their stomachs and crawled. Since they were very small people, weighing perhaps less than one hundred pounds each, and since they were carrying nothing on their backs and very little in their hands, it didn't take very large holes for them to crawl through. Unfortunately, we found it impossible to follow suit, since we were carrying so much equipment and were not built for such gymnastics, and so we were always forced to climb over the logs. I had a large movie camera strapped around my neck and hanging in front of me, with another camera hanging down my back, and water canteens hanging on each side. Otto and José were equally as heavily laden, their packs including hammocks, several additional cameras, and a few gifts for the Indians.

Occasionally during the earlier portion of our journey the trail crossed streams of water. José, Otto, and I picked our way very cautiously, endeavoring to find logs or rocks on which to walk. Soon our feet were thoroughly soaked and from then on we merely waded in the water Indian fashion whenever we encountered a stream.

We soon learned that the Lacandón Indians were decidedly in favor of using streams of water for the trail whenever opportunity afforded itself. When we came upon streams running toward Bonampak, the Indians actually walked in them on several occasions for nearly one hundred yards at a time before coming again onto the land. At certain times the streams in which we were obliged to wade were knee-deep. As is shown in the photograph, the bare-footed Lacandóns lifted their robes high enough to keep them dry while we had to walk in the water fully clothed, including our high-top shoes. Without our Indian guides, we would not have known when to come out of the streams. In fact, the trail was so indistinct and difficult to follow throughout its entire course to Bonampak that had we been alone we would have never reached the "Temple of the Painted Walls"; and certainly we would not have been able to return to the airstrip. We would be ungrateful travelers if we did not extend our gratitude to the Lord and to the Indians of the tropical jungles for our safe arrival back to civilization.

John Lloyd Stephens, who has been termed by some writers "the father of Maya archaeology," since he was the first man in modern times to penetrate certain tropical jungles and visit such places as Copán and then publish an account of his trip and experiences, passed over trails somewhat similar to the one we encountered on our way to Bonampak. The principal differences were that Stephens and his party members were riding mules over a trail which was frequently used by muleteers, and so the vegetation



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 68: STREAM OF WATER USED AS TRAIL

A stream of water used by the Lacandóns for a jungle trail. Left to right: NaBor, the author, and José Dávila.

perhaps would have been more completely cleared away than it was along the trail we walked through the dense Chiapas jungles. To quote Stephens' description:

. . . The woods were of impenetrable thickness and we could see nothing beyond the detestable path before us. For five hours we were dragged through mudholes, squeezed in gulleys, knocked against trees, and tumbled over roots. Every step required care and great physical exertion and, withal, I felt that our inglorious epitaph might well read: "tossed over the head of a mule, brained by the trunk of a mahogany tree, and buried in the mud in Mico Mountain."¹⁵

¹⁵John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatán* (1841), (1949 ed., New Jersey), vol. 1, pp. 30-31.

A NIGHT IN THE JUNGLE

When we were approximately a hiking hour's distance from our desired goal, darkness came. We selected a spot by a small stream of water to make camp. José, Otto, and I attached our hammocks to some trees. We had brought no bedding, and so, wet and exhausted, we crawled into our hammocks hoping to have a good night's sleep. The intense tropical heat of the day was soon replaced by the chill of the night. A wind arose suddenly and blew through the dense foliage, making the weather very chilly. Shortly after we had climbed into our hammocks, we were lying there shivering. We twisted, squirmed, and curled up to get warm, but to no avail. Our teeth chattered as the wind continued to blow throughout the night.

NaBor and Juan, our Indian guides, built a small fire without any matches. They cuddled together by it as the hours of darkness passed. I had a strong urge to join them, but resisted, and lay in my hammock all night uncomfortably cold and most of the time wide-awake.

Now and then during the long and dreary night the thought crowded itself into my mind: "What foolish men we are—both of those Indians have guns and we are lying in these hammocks completely defenseless. They could easily shoot us at any moment, take our goods, and nobody would know where we had gone." Then I would push those disagreeable thoughts aside by reassuring myself that the Lord would protect us, which I acknowledge he did.

About midnight I saw our two Indian guides get up from beside their campfire and, silently and quickly, go along the jungle trail. They were using a flashlight which we had brought them to light their way. As I saw their light vanish in the dense darkness of the night, a horrifying feeling of being left alone in those tropical jungles came over me. For a short time I had a full realization of our utter dependence on those Lacandón Indians. I called to Otto and José, who were asleep, saying: "Our Indian guides have left us. Without them we shall be hopelessly lost in the jungles, since we have no idea how to get back to the airstrip."

They asked, "Where did they go?"

I explained, "They went down the trail toward their homes."

For perhaps thirty minutes we lay in our hammocks discussing our unfortunate circumstances, when suddenly we saw a glimmer of light in the jungles in the direction that the Indians had disappeared. Soon thereafter our guides were with us again. They explained that they had gone in search of dry wood to rebuild their fire. Words cannot express the suspense and apprehension that we endured during the period of time that the Indians were away from us, nor can they describe the satisfaction and relief we felt at their return.

Another deterrent to our sleeping in the jungles was the variety of weird sounds that continuously filled the air. Now and then a limb fell from a tree or a tree crashed to the ground. Wild monkeys chattered, scolded at each other, and screamed; and a numerous variety of birds made diverse sounds according to their natures.

Other visitors to those jungles have had experiences similar to ours. Count Khun de Prorok wrote: "Camp at night was infernal, with the many voices of the jungle. Monkeys of all sorts, jaguars, pumas with their snarling cough, otters, racoons, tapir, and of course, deer were abundant, . . ." ¹⁹ The archaeologist, Thomas Gann, speaking of the howling monkey, usually known as the "howler," wrote:

Great droves of these brutes are to be found everywhere throughout the entire region, . . . They are particularly plentiful in the great trees around the ancient ruined city of Tikal [and Bonampak], . . . They hold frequent concerts in the treetops, usually in the small hours of the morning. The performance starts with a dull roaring noise, which, reverberating over the dark and silent bush at these the most uncanny hours of the twenty-four, is terrifying unless one knows the cause of it. This is followed, after a short interval, by a low wailing, as of lost souls in Hades; another interval follows, to be followed by the roaring again, and so the performance goes on for half an hour or so, rendering sleep quite out of the question.

The Indians believe that the "howlers" of Tikal are reincarnations of the souls of the ancient inhabitants condemned to haunt the scene of their former lives for all time, and when one is awakened from a sound sleep, about 2 a.m., one is apt to believe that there may be something in the superstition. ²⁰

The thoughts of jaguars, snakes, spiders, and other inhabitants of the jungles were disturbing factors in spoiling my night's rest. Just prior to going on that trip, I had read a number of books regarding jungle life. Those travelogues told about the numerous jaguars which infested the jungles. They described the poisonous

¹⁹Count Byron Khun de Prorok, *In Quest of Lost Worlds*, p. 183.

²⁰Thomas Gann, *Maya Cities*, p. 170.

spiders, rattlesnakes eight feet long, boa constrictors twenty feet in length, venomous coral serpents—the American cobra—and numerous other creatures of the jungles. I had read that if a person were bitten by a coral serpent he would die within twenty minutes, so deadly is its venom.

It seemed that all that I had read about that region came flooding through my mind, adding to the apprehension of the seeming dangers which confronted us. Nighttime is the time when small things become enormous in one's mind; and so the hours dragged on while I lay awake with my thoughts.

At times all of the jungle life was quiet—tensely quiet. A stillness prevailed which could almost be felt. The silence was almost unbearable. Perhaps nowhere does one experience the feeling of solitude quite so much as he does at certain times in the jungles. The hours dragged slowly onward. That night was one of the most disagreeable times that I have ever spent, a period of darkness—intense darkness and dreariness—which I shall never forget. We were happy when morning came and all was well.

CONTINUING ON TO BONAMPAK

Following that long, sleepless night, we ate a scant breakfast. Of the small amount of food we brought with us in the jungles, we had only one small can of Vienna sausages left. It contained one little sausage for each of us, including our Lacandón guides, since they had brought no food along. We supplemented the sausages by a drink of water from the stream and were soon on the trail again headed for Bonampak.

We finally arrived at the "Temple of the Painted Walls," which will be described in the next chapter. Our thrill surpassed description. We took photographs of the paintings of the dark and light-colored peoples, and then headed back along the trail towards the Indians' homes.

RETURN TO THE LACANDONS' HOMES

Shortly after leaving Bonampak, NaBor said: "There is another trail which leads back to our homes but does not go past Obregon's *casa*. Juan and I are going on that trail. You men can return the way we came and sign your names in Obregon's big book."



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 69: CROSSING THE LACANHA RIVER ON RETURN FROM BONAMPAK

an (one of the Lacandón Indian guides) paddling the boat taking Milton R. Hunter and José Dávila across the river near José Pepé's home, and NaBor (another Lacandón Indian guide), sitting on the log. Crossing the Lacanhá River on our return from Bonampak. The photograph gives a good view of José Pepé's thatched bowery and hut.

Our reply was, "We will go with you on the new trail. We have no desire to see Obregon again, nor sign his big book."

The heat was intense, and the trail was as difficult as the one we had been on the previous day. The little Lacandón Indians had nothing to carry except a gun each, while we were carrying comparatively heavy packs. They hiked very fast, and so we had great difficulty in keeping up with them. We asked them to carry some of our equipment. They replied, "We have our burdens. We are carrying our guns." The thing which concerned us most was the possibility that they would get too far ahead and we would get lost in the jungles; and so we required that one of them follow behind us and the other go in front.

We became so intensely tired that we felt as if we would drop on the trail and remain there; but of course we realized that we must continue onward to the Indians' *casas*. Never before had I been so fatigued; however, with determination we pressed onward until we achieved our goal.

The pilot had told us that the distance from the airstrip to Bonampak and back was only thirty-two miles. Judging from our experiences and the way we felt, we concluded that one cipher had been omitted—making the distance 320 miles. If anyone doubts this statement, he is at liberty to make a similar trip and thereby verify or disprove our conclusions.

ENTERTAINED BY THE LACANDONS

When we finally arrived at the Indians' homes, naturally our first concern was food, since our rations had been limited to two small sausages each during that and part of the previous day. We asked the Indian women to prepare something for us to eat. In response one of them brought us three eggs. José Dávila asked, "Cooked or raw?"

She replied, "Raw."

He suggested that she cook them.

After washing my hands and face in the river, I looked around for the cleanest place I could find in which to lie down and rest. I soon nestled down in a boat on the river near the bank. While lying in that boat, I looked towards the Indians' thatched houses and observed that one of the Lacandón women was making us some *tortillas*, pounding them flat on her bare leg.

Soon thereafter one woman returned with the three eggs now boiled and another brought us the *tortillas*. I gladly took a boiled egg, but glanced at the other little Indian woman and remarked, "No, I don't care for any *tortillas*." But I was so intensely hungry that my appetite overruled my first decision. The thought came into my mind: "You foolish man, take the *tortillas*. You are starving!" Thereupon I reversed my decision, saying, "I will take one." I ate it and concluded that it was the most delicious morsel of food that I had ever eaten. Then I said, "I will be happy to take another," and it was as delicious as the first. By this time Otto Done and

José Dávila had eaten the remainder of the *tortillas*, while I was wishing for more. After this the Indian woman chopped down a banana tree, providing bananas for our dessert.

Since we were not to meet the plane at the jungle airstrip until 10 o'clock the following morning, the Lacandón Indians insisted on our staying at their home that night, promising that they would guide us to the airstrip the next day in time to meet the plane. They generously offered us, as a place to hang our hammocks that night, an open-air, thatched-roofed shed or bowery which stood on the side of the river opposite their homes.

While we were hanging our hammocks and making other preparation for night, practically all of the Indians spent the remainder of the afternoon and early evening visiting with us. It extended our opportunity to become more familiar with their mode of thinking and their native customs.

I was sitting on a log near the Indians' thatched hut and happened to take off my hat for a moment. From what occurred it is possible that this was the first time one of the Indian boys, the one named Cubano, a young chap with an abundance of hair, had ever seen a bald head. A few moments after replacing my hat I felt it lift from my head, and turning around, I saw that Cubano had slipped behind me and with both hands had lifted my hat off my head so he could look at its baldness. The entire group, including the Indians, laughed heartily. This reaction caused the boy to vanish quickly from sight. However, in a few moments he returned with two pieces of sugar cane, each approximately two feet in length. He handed one to José Dávila, and I reached for the other. He protested, saying, "No! This one is for him," pointing at Otto Done. Naturally I thought I was left out. But my new-found pal slipped behind the shed and returned almost immediately with a piece of sugar cane doubly as large as either of the other pieces. Smiling gleefully, he handed it to me. We concluded that he either felt sorry for me because of my bald head or that I had completely won his favor.

CULTURE OF THE LACANDONS

It was approximately 3:00 p.m. when we had arrived at NaBor's *casa* upon returning from Bonampak. This gave Otto, José, and

me the major portion of the afternoon and early evening to continue our observations and study of those primitive jungle people.

During the past two days we had visited four Lacandón homes and had associated with approximately twenty-five Indians out of an estimated two hundred who lived in small groups scattered throughout the jungles of southeastern Mexico. Four of those we had associated with were men, two were boys, approximately fourteen were women, and there were five babies. Since the Lacandón men were practically beardless—some of them were completely so—it was difficult for us to distinguish them from the women; however, we observed that the men were slightly taller than the women and larger of stature.

Not only did all the women and children wear the type of dress that the three guides who met us on the trail were wearing, but we observed that the men were dressed also exactly like the women. All of those barefooted, jungle people were clothed in loose-fitting, cotton, canvas-like robes which hung from their shoulders to their ankles in the style of a Mother Hubbard. That one type of dress seemed to constitute those Lacandóns' complete wardrobe.

Dr. Sylvanus Morley informs us that the Lacandón Indians do a certain amount of weaving of coarse cloth from a wild cotton which grows in the jungles.²¹ It comes from fiber grown on the giant ceiba, a sacred tree among this people. This silky fiber is known to us as kapok. The Lacandón women gather the fiber, clean it of seeds, spin the thread, and weave the cloth by hand on crude homemade handlooms. Maria, one of Obregon's wives, is the woman shown in the photograph who is spinning cotton into thread on a wooden spindle. The bowl she is using contains ashes which make the spindle turn more easily. The next photograph shows Carmita, first wife of Kayum (Obregon's son—a Lacandón man whom we did not see), weaving cloth on her homemade handloom. It takes, so it is claimed, most of a year's time for an Indian woman to gather sufficient cotton, clean it, and then spin and weave it into cloth to make one robe, or *coton*, as the Lacandóns call their dress. However, from the appearance of this canvas-like cloth it looks as if one dress should last a woman or a man a full lifetime.

The Lacandóns' thatched huts were intensely interesting to us. We observed that in making the walls of their homes, the Indians

²¹Morley, *op. cit.*, pp. 405-406.

had taken small poles approximately two inches in diameter and six feet in length which they had stood upright one next to another. They had fastened the poles securely together by weaving tough vines and bark of trees around and between each of the poles both

Maria, wife of Obregon,
spins cotton into thread
on a wooden spindle.



—Courtesy of Robert Bruce

—Photograph by Robert Bruce

Fig. 70: LACANDON WOMAN SPINNING COTTON

at the bottom ends which stood on the ground as well as at the top ends on which the roofs rested. The weaving of the tough jungle fibers around and between the poles resulted in making the walls of their homes firm and secure, but it had the disadvantage of leaving a space of perhaps an inch or more in width between the poles. On sunny days these cracks serve to let light into their houses;



—Courtesy of Robert Bruce

—Photograph by Barbara Sykes

Fig. 71: LACANDON WOMEN WEAVING CLOTH
Carmita, first wife of Kayum, weaves on a homemade loom.

however, when the wind blows and the storms come, the cracks let the cold air into their homes. On such occasions living conditions are very difficult for those primitive jungle people. Imagine the dreary and cold conditions of their homes during the rainy season, which lasts from May until October. The rain falls in torrents almost every day, perhaps a hundred inches falling during six months' time.

We observed that some of their houses were built in circular form, being approximately twenty feet in diameter, while others were rectangular in shape. Some of their homes had boweries attached, while the bowery owned by NaBor stood across the river (El Cedro) a hundred yards or more from their two *casas*. Mother Earth supplied the floors for all the Lacandóns' homes. The Indians merely placed a few small, fiber mats upon the dirt floors. The roofs, thatched with palm leaves or other similar leaves which grew in abundance in the jungles, were supported by several large poles which stood upright at various places inside the houses. There were

no windows, but an opening was left in the wall of each house for a door. Small poles had been placed securely across these openings up to approximately two feet in height to keep their domesticated animals and poultry out of their houses.

The two thatched houses in which NaBor and Juan, with their families, lived stood in the center of a spot which they had carved out of the jungles. The entire setting was magnificent. Their garden was surrounded by the exceedingly green, dense, majestic forest. A river of sparkling water, El Cedro, ran nearby. This supplied them with culinary water, and also furnished ideal fishing opportunities for the Lacandón men. Since fishhooks were difficult or practically impossible for these jungle people to obtain, they

Fig. 72: KAYUM'S BEE TREE YIELDS AN ABUNDANCE OF HONEY

Fig. 73: KAYUM REMOVES A FISH, A SMALL MACAWHIL, FROM HIS CHUSO

Photograph by Robert Bruce

Courtesy of Robert Bruce for use of both photographs

—Photograph by Barbara Sykes



resorted to fishing methods employed by their ancestors; i.e., they speared the fish. This involved a rather complicated technique, but the men were expert at it. Robert Bruce, who spent several months living with the Lacandóns, claims that one of their most efficient fishermen could spear a dozen fish in a half hour's time. Kayum is shown in the photograph removing a fish, a small *macawhil*, from his spear or *chuso*. It would take much patience, calm nerves, and a steady hand to fish successfully by the Lacandóns' method.

The next photograph shows Kayum getting some honey from a tree where a swarm of wild bees have deposited it. That particular type of bee does not sting; but there is another type of honey bee in the jungles which does sting, as do the bees in our section of the country. There is a third type of bee, so it is reported, in the region where the Lacandóns live which does not sting, but it does get into the Indians' hair and bites.

Honey constitutes a very important item in the lives of the Lacandóns. They not only use it for food, but it also serves even more important purposes as wax for candles and wax for such uses as strengthening the thread with which they tie arrowheads and feathers to shafts. The Indians also use it in waxing bowstrings, to form mouthpieces for their *chors*, or flutes, and for numerous other things. Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson indicates that honey and beeswax constitute valuable articles not only for the Lacandóns but also for all Maya peoples. Speaking of his Maya guide, Jacinto, who was not a Lacandón, Dr. Thompson wrote:

On archaeological trips Jacinto keeps an eye open for the hives of wild bees. Honey is a treat for any Maya, but, more important, the hive yields wax. Jacinto strains the black wax and takes it home at the end of the season to use in his private intercession, for candles of black beeswax are more efficacious than store candles in religious rites. . . .²²

The gardens of each of the four Lacandón families which we visited consisted of several acres of land in each from which the Indians had burned the jungle growth. These people were producing bananas, sweet potatoes of several varieties, sugar cane, papayas, tobacco, beans, gourds, and especially corn, which constituted the principal items in their diet.

The Lacandón women and children plant and harvest the crops. According to the viewpoint of the men, such menial labor was be-

²²Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

low their dignity. The adult male members of the clan did only the important work—hunting and fishing. It was the duty of the women to raise the food and prepare it for eating, tend the livestock, spin and weave the cloth and make the clothing, and do all other tasks which constitute real work.

Chan Kim, stepson of NaBor, plants corn in the family *milpa* or garden.



—Courtesy of Robert Bruce

—Photograph by Robert Bruce

Fig. 74: LACANDON INDIAN PLANTING CORN

About the first of May the Lacandón women and their children plant their crops. They plant their corn by pushing sharp sticks into the ground and then dropping the kernels in the holes. Other seeds are planted in like manner. The photograph shows Chan Kim, NaBor's stepson, planting corn in the family *milpa* or garden. The

Indians do no cultivating, irrigating, nor fertilizing of the land. Throughout the summer months it rains almost continuously. The corn and other garden products grow abundantly. In the fall the rains cease. The corn is not harvested, but it is left standing throughout the winter with the ears still attached. Whenever the Indians want corn, they simply pull off an ear, shuck it, and it is ready for grinding. This procedure protects corn from rodents and preserves it from moisture. All their products are also left on the vines or trees until needed.

The life of the Lacandóns is difficult. Those primitive people face a continuous struggle to provide sufficient food upon which to subsist. Also, they have to contend with adverse conditions of nature, especially during the stormy season. Tropical diseases such as dysentery, hookworm, and malaria are constantly undermining their health and shortening their lives.

While gardening constitutes one of the principal duties of the Lacandón women, perhaps hunting is the activity most commonly engaged in by the men. The two parrots owned by NaBor and Juan are kept for the purpose of attracting wild parrots. They are constantly perched in a tree near the Lacandóns' homes and effectively serve as decoys in attracting wild parrots which the Indians shoot for food according to their desires and needs. However, it should be pointed out that the Maya Indians never kill animals just for sport, as our people sometimes do. "The hunter asks the gods of hunting to send him what he requires, and usually points out that he is in need of the food; *otzilem*, 'I am poor or afflicted,' is the term he uses, . . . the expression really means that he needs food."²³ The second evening that we were with the Lacandóns, we saw perhaps a hundred parrots sitting in the trees around the Indians' camp, and they were completely unmolested. The men had just killed an owl which supplied them with sufficient meat for the time being.

Perhaps the most favored game hunted by these Indians is *jabali*, or wild pig. Each Lacandón family keeps a pack of mongrel dogs for the purpose of assisting the men in the hunt. The wild pigs travel in herds. They are extremely vicious, and because of their sharp tusks they are dangerous to the hunters and their dogs. The Lacandón men, however, hunt them even when they have no

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

ammunition for their guns. They have the dogs cut one of the pigs out of the herd and corner it. The men then stab it to death with a *machete* tied to the end of a pole. Of course, sometimes the rest of the herd comes to the aid of the squealing victim, causing the Lacandóns to climb the trees for safety and the dogs to head pell-mell toward home.

The photograph, showing Maria, Carranza's second wife, singeing the hair off a dead pig with an *escoba* (torch) while Carranza scrapes off the singed hair with his knife, gives evidence that the Lacandóns have had a successful hunt. The other photograph shows Carmita, first wife of Carranza, pouring water from a *jicora* (gourd) while her husband completes the task of scraping the pig clean. The boy Cubano watches the entire procedure with mature dignity.

The Lacandón Indians do their cooking on open-air campfires. They build their fireplaces by placing two rocks side by side, and

Fig. 75: LACANDONS SINGE PIG'S HAIR

Maria, second wife of Carranza, sings pig with an *escoba* (torch) while Carranza scrapes off the singed hair with his knife.

Courtesy of Robert Bruce

—Photograph by Robert Bruce



about eighteen inches from them they place two other rocks in a similar position. They make their fires for cooking purposes between those rocks. The photograph shows Old Rosita cooking some of the meat of the wild pigs. She has placed green sticks across the rocks to form a grill. The meat is placed on the sticks and left there while it cooks.

Old Rosita is also shown in one of the photographs cooking *tortillas* on an earthenware grill which is on the rocks above the fire and coals.

A NIGHT IN NABOR'S BOWERY

Darkness came, and we crawled into our hammocks, which hung from the ceiling of NaBor's bowery. By 10:00 p.m. we were again lying there shaking and shivering, as we had done the previous

Fig. 76: LACANDONS SCRAPE HAIR OFF PIG

Carmita, first wife of Carranza, pours water from a *jicora* (gourd) while Carranza scrapes the pig clean. Cubano watches.

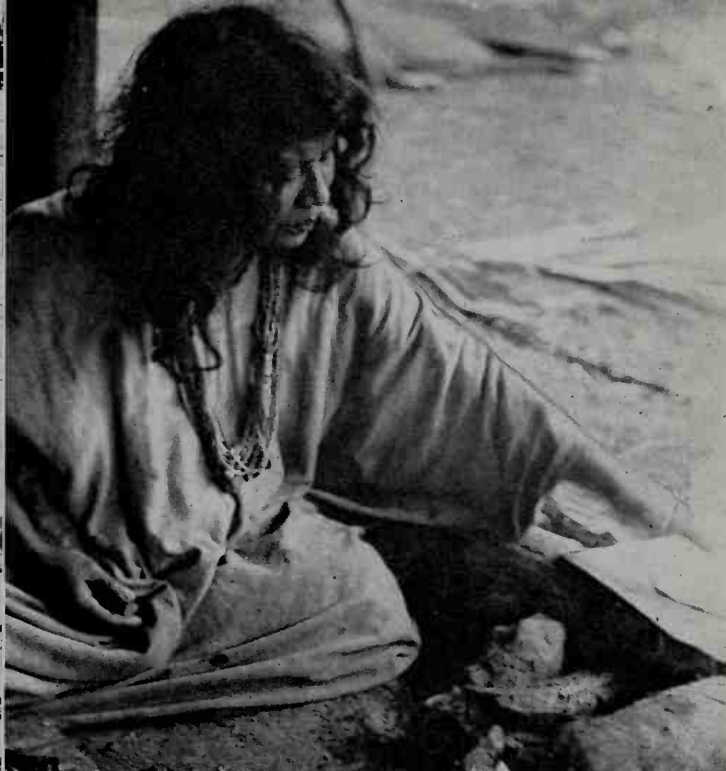
—Courtesy of Robert Bruce

—Photograph by Robert Bruce





courtesy of Robert Bruce



—Photographs by Robert Bruce

Fig. 77: OLD ROSITA COOKING PORK

Fig. 78: OLD ROSITA, FIRST WIFE OF NABOR, MAKING TORTILLAS

night. José got out of his hammock and built a fire between Otto's hammock and mine and another one outside the shed on the other side of his. He stayed up for approximately an hour and kept the fires burning—small, warm fires, the kind Indians build, which kept us comfortably warm—while Otto and I slept peacefully.

By 3:00 a.m., however, the fires had completely burned out. I awoke and found that I was again very chilly; and so I got out of my hammock and really built fires—big fires which gave an abundance of heat, entirely too much for the comfort of my companions. During the following hour, Otto and José complained because of being overheated, informing me that I didn't know how to build the proper kind of fire. However, I was quite satisfied with my accomplishment, and so I got back into my hammock and snatched an hour's sleep before morning came.

About 6:00 a.m. I got up, dressed, and went over to where José Dávila was sleeping peacefully. I reached into his hammock to awaken him. As I touched him, he screamed. Then he awoke and said, "Thank goodness you woke me. I was dreaming that Obregon had come here and shot all three of us."

RETURNING TO THE AIRSTRIP

After eating a banana and chewing on the sugar cane, which constituted our breakfast, we returned along the jungle trail to the airstrip, accompanied by NaBor and Juan, four of their wives, the two Indian boys, and the dogs—all twelve of them.

The most memorable event that took place on the way was the killing of a wild turkey. Juan shot it. I have never in my life seen a more beautiful bird. Its back feathers were dark and glossy, some-



NaBor, our Lacandón guide who took José, Otto, and the author to Bonampak.

—*Photograph by Otto Done*

Fig. 79: PORTRAIT OF NABOR

what greeny bronze in color, with lighter-colored plumage underneath. Its bill was rather orange, similar to that of a wild goose. On its head was a topknot composed of greenish-black feathers about two inches long, similar in appearance to ostrich plumes. Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson described the wild turkeys of that region as

follows: “. . . and there are wild turkeys of the ocellated variety with greeny bronze plumage and peacock-eyed feathers.”²⁴ At the Indians' request, Otto Done hung the bird high up in a tree to protect it from the dogs; and then we continued along the trail to the airstrip.

We arrived at 9:30 a.m., one-half hour ahead of the appointed time. No plane was in sight. We waited and waited for five hours' time, anxiously searching the northern horizon for the approach of the plane.

While we waited we were entertained by our Indian friends, and we in turn entertained them. Otto permitted NaBor—the patriarch of the group—to use his minute camera and take pictures of his family. He practically missed them, taking only their heads and shoulders. This amused the Indians exceedingly. How they laughed! I have never seen a group of people who seemed to enjoy life more than did those Indians. They seemed to have had all the time in the world to rest and play, and certainly knew how to relax and enjoy themselves. They laughed and joked, fully demonstrating their jovial natures. During a period of more than two full days and two nights that we were with them, I never saw one disagreeable nor disrespectful act nor heard one unkind word expressed by any of them. Others who have associated with the Maya Indians have given reports of their character and dispositions similar to our evaluation of them. Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson, one of America's outstanding Maya scholars, wrote:

. . . Most lowland Maya are light-hearted and seem to enjoy life—well adjusted, as the current expression puts it. . . .²⁵

And a little later in his book, Thompson wrote:

. . . Pondering whether my attitude toward the Maya, past and present, might be too sentimental and idealistic, I turned to the writings of Karl Sapper, German geographer and ethnologist, who lived for several years with the Kekchi Maya of Alta Verapaz, and to the judgment of Alfred Tozzer, who has lived among the Lacandóns.

Sapper says of the Kekchi that family training and racial custom seek to instill control of every kind of mental excitement, to teach moderation in all actions, and to inculcate subordination to superiors. He comments that the quick gestures and loud speech of most Europeans and North Americans are evidence to the Indian of deficiencies in our training and of the low status of our civilization. . . .

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 262.

Tozzer writes of the Lacandón that their morals are good and their family life happy, seldom disturbed by discord or strife. He notes that they view with disgust the loose morals and infidelity of whites and *ladions* with whom they come in contact, and that generally they are truthful, honest, generous, hospitable, and mild.

. . . These judgments of Maya character reassure me that my assessment is not unduly idealistic or influenced by sentimentality.²⁶

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 263

Fig. 80: FOUR LACANDON WOMEN, EL CEDRO CLAN
Woman at right has white skin and red hair.

—*Photograph by Otto Done*



LEAVING THE JUNGLES

Finally the plane arrived. As the pilot alighted from it he said: "I am surprised to find you here. I am late because I believed that you would never get back from the jungles, and if you did, certainly not by the appointed time."

We replied, "We had no intention of staying in the jungles"; however, we gratefully acknowledge that the Lord blessed us and prospered our journey.

The aviator explained that the runway was so short and so covered with grass that if he attempted to take all of us together he wouldn't be able to get the plane off the ground. He first flew me, our photographic materials, and luggage from El Cedro airstrip to Tenosique. When he returned for Otto and José, he took to the Lacandóns salt and other vital articles badly needed by those primitive jungle dwellers. We contributed those things to them in gratitude for their kindnesses; and we extended to them our deepest sympathy for the hardships which they must endure to continue to live.

Our trip to Bonampak was very strenuous but intensely interesting. We felt that our association with the Lacandón Indians, added to our other experiences, was very significant.

Otto, José, and I are grateful to have seen the "painted walls" in the famous ancient Maya temple at Bonampak, which gave us additional confirmation to the Book of Mormon claims that white and dark peoples—originally Nephites and Lamanites—had lived in ancient America.

CHAPTER 8

WHITE AND DARK PEOPLE OF ANCIENT AMERICA

BONAMPAK—THE “TEMPLE OF THE PAINTED WALLS”

As Otto Done, José Dávila, our two Indian guides, NaBor and Juan, and I approached Bonampak early in the morning on January 19, 1955, our right to be there was vigorously protested by a number of wild monkeys. They screamed and chattered while scampering through the trees, highly indignant at our trespassing. Perhaps they felt that they were the guardians of these Maya temples which had been erected approximately 1300 years ago. However, we paid little attention to their noise because we had been informed by our guides that we were approaching Bonampak's most famous edifice, the “Temple of the Painted Walls,” which is considered one of the most important archaeological discoveries made thus far in the twentieth century.

Eagerly we climbed the principal pyramid upon which stands the ancient Maya edifice. We observed that the building is approximately sixty-five feet in length, containing three rooms. Each of the rooms, approximately ten by seventeen feet in size, contains one door and no windows. The building is constructed of rocks covered with excellent stucco. The interior walls are plastered and are still in a good state of preservation even though hundreds of years have elapsed since their construction. The entire interior wall surfaces of the three rooms, including the sloping convex ceilings, are covered with murals, “painted in exquisite perspective.”¹

We entered each of the rooms and excitedly examined and photographed the colorfully painted frescoes. Then with a *machete* we cleared the vegetation from the top of the pyramid in front of the “Temple of the Painted Walls,” so that we could photograph the exterior of the building.

¹Charles Morrow Wilson, “Rediscovering Lost Temples of the Mayas,” *Travel* (Baltimore, November 1948), p. 26.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 81: “TEMPLE OF PAINTED WALLS”

NaBor, our Lacandón guide, standing in front of the “Temple of the Painted Walls” at Bonampak, Chiapas, Mexico.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF BONAMPAK

Also, we examined and studied some of the other archaeological remains at Bonampak, which included other buildings, three large stelae, and two limestone altars. Charles Morrow Wilson states that one of the altars

. . . is considered one of the best examples of Maya sculpture yet discovered. It rivals the stone carvings at Palenque, which are commonly regarded as among the finest examples of Maya sculpture.²

Bonampak, which is Maya for “Painted Walls,” consists of at least eight standing temples which are “. . . believed to have been built in the sixth and seventh centuries A.D.”³ “Although it may have been founded much earlier, Bonampak was in its prime during the seventh century, according to date glyphs.”⁴

As previously mentioned, the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D. C., suggested that the ancient Americans may

²Charles Morrow Wilson, “Open Sesame to the Maya,” *Pan American Union Bulletin* (Washington, D. C., Vol. LXXXII, No. 7, July 1948), p. 379.

³Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁴Charles Morrow Wilson, “Backwards a Dozen Centuries,” *Natural History* (New York, October 1947), p. 370.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 82: BROKEN STELA AT BONAMPAK

Milton R. Hunter and NaBor examining a broken Maya stela at Bonampak, Chiapas, Mexico.

have settled Bonampak two to three centuries earlier than 600 A.D.⁵ If that information is correct, this ancient Maya city could have been founded as early as 300 A.D., which would place its establishment within the Book of Mormon period.

MAYA ART AND BONAMPAK MURALS

Dr. Sylvanus G. Morley and other scholars of Meso-American cultures have maintained that “painting was a fine art among the Maya and reached a degree of excellence attained by no other people of aboriginal America.”⁶ Until the discovery of Bonampak, archaeologists had made only a few fragmentary finds of Maya paintings on which to base their conclusions; however, the Bonam-

⁵*Ancient Maya Paintings of Bonampak, Mexico*. Supplementary Publication 46, 1955, Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington D. C., p. 6.

⁶Sylvanus G. Morley, *The Ancient Maya* (Palo Alto, Calif., 1946), p. 412.

pak murals confirm the former statements made by scholars, showing the importance of the "extremely talented painters whom the greatest Indian civilization developed." In the words of Charles Morrow Wilson:

But the amazing find at Bonampak reveals life in the Golden Age of the Maya with all the powers of strong colors, brilliantly used. The 1300-year-old murals show ceremonial processions of warriors and kings; also scenes of sacrifices, rituals, and battles. Painted on a kind of stucco which is superimposed on limestone masonry, the mural depicts a handsome pageantry featuring elaborate feather headdresses, ceremonial bars which were ancient Mayan scepters of authority and the musical instruments of the great Mayas of old—long Tibetan-style horns, huge turtle-shell rattlers and drums made of wood and clay with ornamented skinned heads.

More revealing are the costumes worn by the great Mayas of old. These are pictured as having been made of deer and jaguar skins handsomely ornamented by jade—probably imported from distant places. Cloth garments, apparently made of cotton, are interwoven with numerous figurines, glyphs, and planetary symbols. The favorite colors include red on white, rich green on brown, dark brown on white, and brilliant sashes. In all instances the ancient Mayas are pictured as a strong and healthy people, of outstanding dignity and charm.⁷

[The principal temple contains more than 1200 square feet of murals] magnificently painted by superbly skilled early American artists who worked at least eight centuries before the great mural paintings of Europe were made. Remarkably enough the heroic wall paintings of the pre-Columbian American artists excell in many respects the best of European mural art. More important they open the way to a greatly improved understanding of what many experts believe was a Golden Age of ingenious American culture. . . .⁸

. . . Artists are impressed by the versatility of the colors—at least eleven colors are used effectively—and it is believed that both vegetable and mineral paints were used. The perspective is amazingly skillful, even by contemporary standards. . . .⁹

In a 1955 publication of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Maya art at Bonampak and elsewhere is discussed as follows:

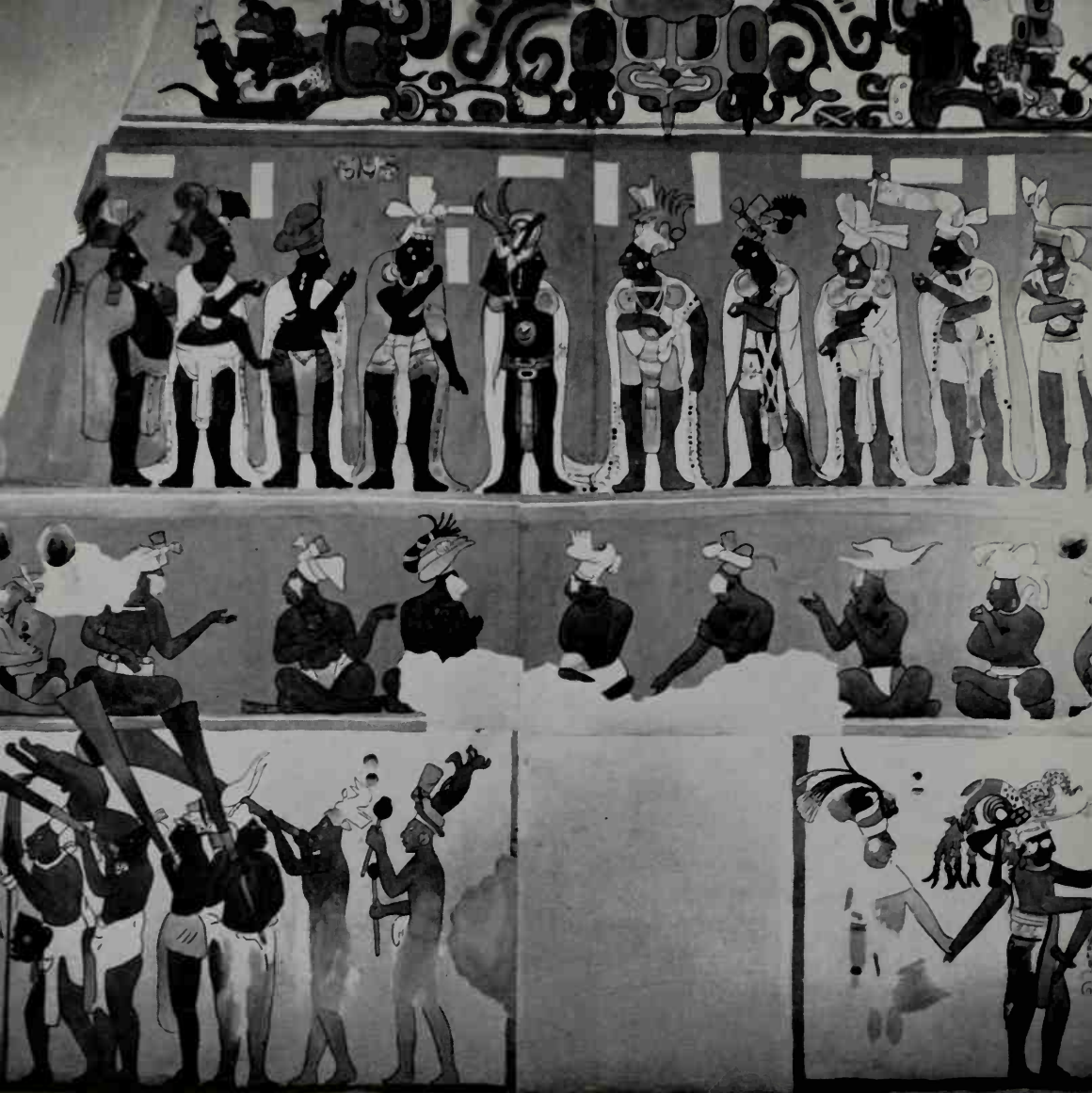
The [Bonampak] murals are in no sense an ordinary discovery in the field of Middle American archaeology. They have received attention, professional and popular, that can be compared to few events in the entire range of prehistoric studies in the Americas.

One hardly need be a student of aesthetics to realize that here is exceptional art. On the other hand, one should have some knowledge of aboriginal American cultures to understand the uniqueness of the Bonampak expression. Certainly nothing comparable has appeared in the realm of Maya art, nor does it seem likely that the discovery will soon be equaled. . . .

⁷Wilson, "Rediscovering Lost Temples of the Mayas," *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 26.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 83: SCENE FROM BONAMPAK MURAL

Reproduction of one of the scenes from inner wall of Bonampak. Observe the masterful art work.

Realism is a type of expression that is virtually unknown in Middle American delineation (the Teotihuacán murals are replete with symbolism) and indeed throughout most aboriginal American art. Yet here at Bonampak we find not only realism of forms but a straightforward handling of the subject that cannot fail to interest the observer. It may well be this quality, a quality somewhat closer to our own classic tradition and well removed from the complex and perplexing symbolism that carries through nearly all Middle American art, which has attracted such keen attention to the murals. In studying these paintings, one must appreciate the difference between Middle American art conventions and our own. There is no perspective, no

chiaroscuro; the favorite Maya convention of showing faces in profile dominates the scenes. But how pleasant to be free of the great religious art of Middle America, weighted down with esoteric symbols and representations of mythological monsters, the significance of which is a source of unending speculation to present-day scholars never initiated into their mysteries!

The Bonampak scenes recount events the artist himself may have witnessed and are at least based on his own personal observations on the life of his day. There is great economy of expression, barely sufficient to indicate what is happening. The status of various individuals is indicated by differences in dress, but no single protagonist dominates the scene, as is invariably the case in monumental sculpture of the Maya. Each figure is an individual; characterization is so vivid as to have at times almost the quality of caricature. The artist does not hesitate to introduce small episodes incidental to the main theme as personal commentary on social types or personalities.

Unlike earlier Maya murals and those from other parts of Middle America, the Bonampak murals reveal a preoccupation with natural forms for their own sake. This appreciation of form itself as aesthetically expressive leads to an attempt not only to copy it faithfully, but to abstract its expressive qualities, to exaggerate them, using them in the design to create mood and motion. The artistry is so delicate, the line so sensitive, that we can fully appreciate it only by a close examination of photographs of the originals.

The sureness, accuracy, the purity of line in these paintings is truly remarkable. Nevertheless, the modern observer is likely to be shocked by the occasional glaring errors in the construction of the human form, difficult to reconcile with such subtle and acute observation of outline. The errors can be explained only by the Maya's habit of perceiving all forms in silhouette and neglecting their relation to the third dimension. The face of the Mayan figure, except in high-relief sculpture, is almost always presented in profile. Likewise, the feet, unless the figure is seated, are invariably shown in side view. Only in the study of hands did the Maya artist have a wide choice of positions, perhaps because he used the gesture of hands to express meanings, . . . Certainly on the Bonampak murals much of the action is expressed in the hands, and the stiffness of an arrangement of a row of figures is greatly relieved and enlivened by gestures suggesting conversation. . . .

. . . How much they [painters of Bonampak murals] could express in simple outline is really admirable; for example, the intensity of the drama in the scene on the wall of Room 3 is adequately conveyed by nothing more than the swirling lines of the plumed headdresses of the dancers.¹⁰

During February and March, 1947, archaeologists and artists studied and photographed the Bonampak murals. Also, water color paintings were made, reproducing the scenes as nearly like the originals as possible. The reproductions have been housed in such places as the National Museum and the Palace of Fine Arts in the city of Mexico and the museum in Guatemala City.

¹⁰*Ancient Maya Paintings of Bonampak*, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-12, 14.



—*Photograph by Otto Done*

Fig. 84: BATTLE SCENE FROM BONAMPAK MURAL

White and dark peoples. Reproduction of mural from inner wall, "Temple of the Painted Walls," Bonampak, Mexico. A battle scene is shown.

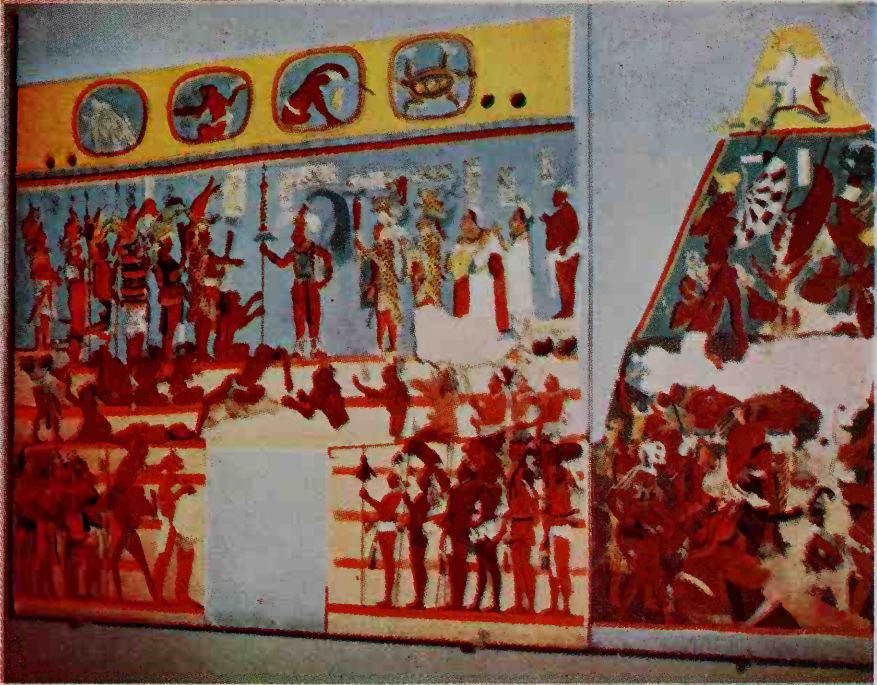
WHITE AND DARK-COLORED PEOPLES DEPICTED—NEPHITES AND LAMANITES

A point of great interest which one observes in studying the original murals on the inner walls of the temple at Bonampak and the reproductions made by the artists is that these are life-size paintings which depict three distinctively different colors of people. It is probable that they represent the various races that were living in Bonampak at the time the frescoes were painted. Attention should be focused at this point on a statement previously quoted from the article published by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, publication 46, which states:

The Bonampak scenes recount events the artist himself may have witnessed and are at least based on his own personal observations on the life of his day.¹¹

If the foregoing conclusion is true, then why could not the artist in painting some of the people white and others red be representing two distinctively different races of people whom he had

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 11.



—Photographs by Otto Done

Fig. 85: COLORED REPRODUCTION OF BONAMPAK MURALS
Reproductions of murals from the inner walls of the "Temple of the Painted Walls," Bonampak, Mexico, depicting white and dark people.

witnessed, basing his work “. . . on his own personal observations on the life of his day”)? It appears that such was the case.

The murals portray people as white as the Caucasian races of Europe and as the Semitic Hebrews and other races of the Mediterranean world. The skin color of many of the others closely resembles the bronze-skinned natives of America, known since the days of Columbus as Indians. Interspersed among these are also a few representations of black people, as dark as the darkest Negroes.

The question immediately arises: Who were these white and dark peoples depicted in the Bonampak murals?

It is the opinion of the writer that the bronze-skinned persons and the white people are descendants of the Lamanites and the Nephite races, which are described in the Book of Mormon.

APOSTASY FROM THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST AND SYMBOLS OF CHRIST

The quetzal (ket'-sal) feathers shown as headdresses in the murals and those depicted on the lintels of the doors suggest that the builders of Bonampak were worshipers of Quetzalcoatl (Ketsal-co-watl') or the “White Bearded God” who visited the people in ancient America and whom Latter-day Saints identify as Jesus Christ.¹² Since the murals were painted less than two hundred years following the close of Nephite history, such a short time having elapsed would practically assure the traditions as those of Christ's appearances and connect the builders of Bonampak with Book of Mormon peoples.

One fact should be kept in mind: namely, at the close of Nephite history a great apostasy from Christ's true religion occurred. Following the close of the Book of Mormon, the religion of the descendants of the Nephites and Lamanites was pagan, the true gospel which Christ had taught to their ancestors having been greatly adulterated. But since the most important event that had ever occurred in the history of ancient America was the appearance of the resurrected Savior on this continent, the descendants of Book of Mormon peoples carried forward a remembrance of that great event in their traditions. They adopted the quetzal bird and the

¹²Note: A marvelous account of Christ's appearances to the inhabitants of ancient America is given in the Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi.

serpent, *coatl* (co-watl'), as symbols of the "White Bearded God," whom they named Quetzalcoatl and whom they worshiped with their diverse pagan practices.

NEPHITES AND LAMANITES IN ANCIENT AMERICA

As is well-known, two peoples—a white race and those of a darker color—inhabited ancient America for approximately one thousand years' time. The white race was called Nephites and the darker race Lamanites. Speaking of their skin colors, Nephi declared that the Lord

... had caused the cursing to come upon them [Laman and his associates] ... wherefore, as they were white, and exceeding fair and delightsome, ... the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them.¹³

Approximately five hundred years later, Alma wrote:

And the skins of the Lamanites were dark, according to the mark which was a curse upon them because of their transgression and their rebellion against their brethren, who consisted of Nephi, Jacob, and Joseph, and Sam, who were just and holy men.¹⁴

SURVIVAL OF SOME NEPHITES THROUGH THE AGES

The reader may say: "Yes, we understand that there were a white race and a dark race in ancient America from approximately 600 B.C. until approximately 400 A.D., but we have understood also that by the latter date all the white people (Nephites), except Moroni, had been killed in a war with the darker people or Lamanites."

It is true that the Nephite nation ended toward the close of the fifth century A.D., but probably many of the white Nephites were saved from death by joining the Lamanites. These then would not be followers of Christ and would be unfaithful ones. The last great war was not fought entirely on the lines of race, but probably the determining factor was that one group allied itself with the Lamanite traditions, and the other group followed the Nephite traditions, including a belief in Jesus Christ. Thus there probably were dark and white people in each army.¹⁵

¹³2 Nephi 5:21.

¹⁴Alma 3:6.

¹⁵3 Nephi 2:14-16.



—*Photograph by Otto Done*

Fig. 86: COLORED REPRODUCTION OF CHICHEN ITZA MURAL

Reproduction of a mural on the wall of the Temple of the Warriors at Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, Mexico, depicting dark and white people. The white people seem to be in bondage to the dark-skinned people. Observe the plumed serpent, indicating that the people are worshipers of Quetzalcoatl.

The Book of Mormon gives evidence that some of the Nephites (white people) survived the last great war; for example, between the dates of 400 and 421 A.D., possibly toward the latter date and approximately thirty-five years after the last great battle, Moroni wrote:

. . . I make not myself known to the Lamanites lest they should destroy me.

For behold, their wars are exceedingly fierce among themselves; and because of their hatred they put to death every Nephite that will not deny the Christ.

And I, Moroni, will not deny the Christ; wherefore, I wander whithersoever I can for the safety of mine own life.¹⁶

PREDICTIONS OF PRESERVATION OF NEPHITES FOREVER

Although prophet after prophet throughout the entire course of Nephite history predicted that the Lamanites would destroy the Nephite nation when the latter people became "ripe in iniquity," the Lord through his holy prophets also promised the Nephites that some of their seed would be preserved forever. The first of these promises recorded in the Book of Mormon was made near the beginning of Nephite history by Father Lehi to his son Joseph. In giving his son a patriarchal blessing, Lehi predicted:

And now I speak unto you, Joseph, my last born. . . .

And may the Lord consecrate also unto thee this land, . . . for thine inheritance and the inheritance of thy seed with thy brethren, for thy security forever, . . .

. . . for thy seed shall not utterly be destroyed.¹⁷

Jacob, the brother of Nephi, told the Nephites that God

. . . has promised . . . us that our seed shall not utterly be destroyed, according to the flesh, but that he would preserve them; and in future generations they shall become a righteous branch unto the house of Israel.¹⁸

The foregoing prophecy indicates that through an apostate line the seed of the Nephites would be preserved in the land. Alma made a similar statement. He predicted the destruction of the Nephites as a nation, pointing out that some of them, however, would not be destroyed but would be numbered among the Lamanites. To quote:

¹⁶Moroni 1:1-3.

¹⁷2 Nephi 3:1-3.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 9:53.

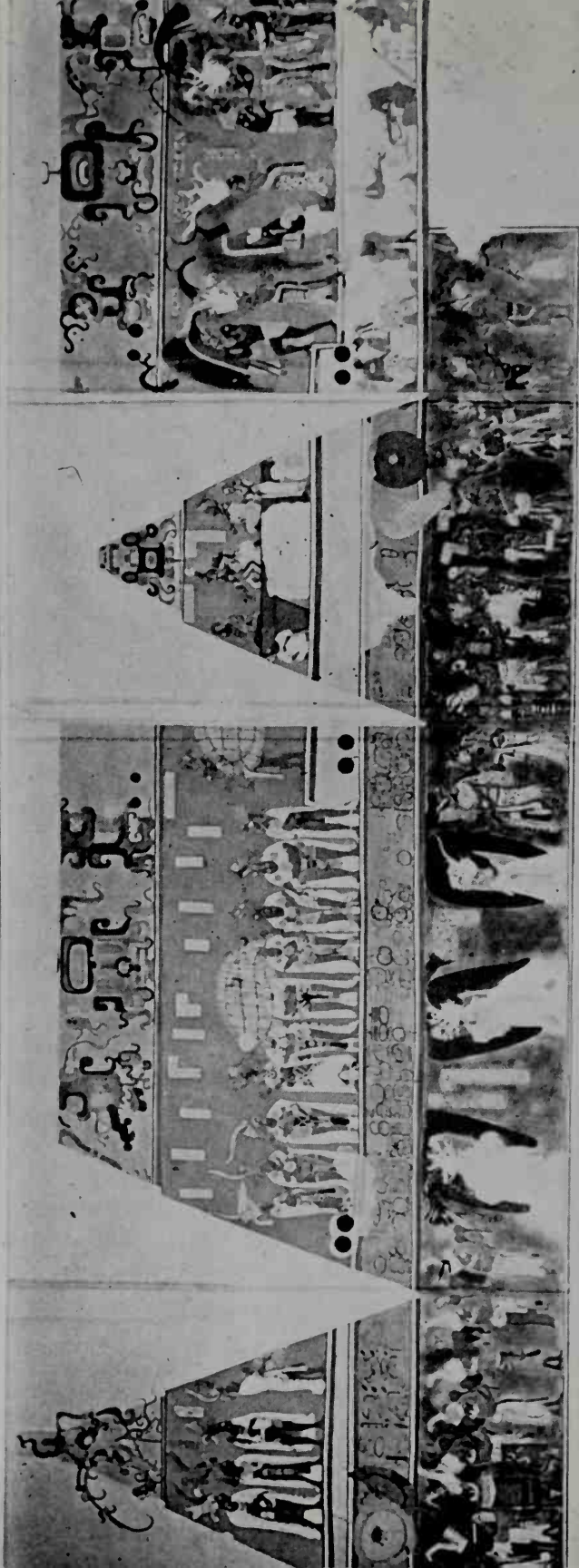


Fig. 87: TEJEDA'S REPRODUCTIONS OF BONAMPAK MURAL

Reproduction of the Bonampak murals from one of the rooms of the "Temple of the Painted Walls." The reproduction, made by Tejeda, an artist from Guatemala, is in the National Museum of Guatemala. The two triangular-shaped portions of the murals show the shape of the ends of the room. In their architectural structures, the Mayas sloped the walls toward each other until they finally joined together, forming corbeled vaulting or the Maya arch. The three white men dressed in elaborate robes form the center of the principal scene of the lower mural. The darker-colored people, carrying torches and facing the three central figures, are perhaps engaged with them in a religious ceremony. The elaborate headresses made of quetzal feathers which the three white men are wearing indicate their important status as the religious leaders—perhaps the "high priests"—of the group. Observe the interesting writing in the panel above the three white men. There are several other scenes, some showing the home life of the people, in the murals.

. . . the time . . . cometh that those who are now, or the seed of those who are now numbered among the people of Nephi, shall no more be numbered among the people of Nephi.

But whosoever remaineth, and is not destroyed in that great and dreadful day, shall be numbered among the Lamanites, . . .¹⁹

An angel from heaven had previously given Nephi this information, declaring that a mixture of the seed of the Nephites would remain forever among the Lamanites or American Indians. In speaking of the latter days—the days in which we live—the angel declared:

. . . the Lord God will not suffer that the Gentiles will utterly destroy the mixture of thy seed, which are among thy brethren.

Neither will he suffer that the Gentiles shall destroy the seed of thy brethren [Lamanites or Indians].²⁰

MODERN REVELATION DECLARING NEPHITES STILL LIVE

In modern revelation the Lord confirmed the fulfilment of the promise made to his ancient prophets. In speaking of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, he declared:

Nevertheless, my work shall go forth, for inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, even so shall the knowledge of a Savior come unto my people—

And to the Nephites, and the Jacobites, and the Josephites, and the Zoramites, through the testimony of their fathers—

And this testimony shall come to the knowledge of the Lamanites, and the Lemuelites, and the Ishmaelites, who dwindled in unbelief because of the iniquity of their fathers, . . .

And for this very purpose are these plates preserved, which contain these records— . . .²¹

Certainly the Lord would not have made mention of the Book of Mormon record coming to the descendants of the Nephites if there were no descendants remaining in America at the time of its publication.

PRESIDENT WILFORD WOODRUFF'S STATEMENT

President Wilford Woodruff accepted the promises of the Lord that some of the seed of the Nephites would be preserved; and he

¹⁹Alma 45:13-14.

²⁰1 Nephi 13:30.

²¹D. & C. 3:16-19; 2 Nephi 29:12-13.

firmly believed that he found some of the direct descendants of the Nephites in New Mexico and Arizona. He spent several months doing missionary work with the Indians in that section of the country, and then, on September 15, 1879, he wrote a letter to President John Taylor and the Council of the Twelve in which he stated:

In my short communication of the 2nd inst., I promised to give a fuller account of my visit to the Isletas, which I will now endeavor to do. I view my visit among the Nephites one of the most interesting missions of my life, although short. I say *Nephites* because if there are any Nephites on this continent we have found them among the Zunis, Lagumas [Lagunas], and Isletas, for they are a different race of people altogether from the Lamanites. I class the Navajo, Moquis, [Hopis], and Apaches with the Lamanites, although they are in advance of many Indian tribes of America. I class the Zunis, Lagumas, and the Isletas among the Nephites (See D. & C. 3:17).²²

MURALS DEPICTING WHITE AND DARK PEOPLE AT CHICHEN ITZA

In addition to the famous Bonampak murals, other similar wall paintings made by Indians, depicting white and dark people, have been discovered; for example, murals were painted on the walls of the Temple of the Warriors at Chichén Itzá, Yucatán—according to archaeologists, painted approximately 1,000 A.D.²³ These murals show white people in bondage to a dark-skinned race, while other murals show white people being defeated in war by a darker-colored race, as the two illustrations show. In 1931 Morris, Charlot, and Morris, in an elaborately illustrated and exhaustive study of *The Temple of the Warriors at Chichén Itzá, Yucatán*, reached the conclusion that those murals thoroughly demonstrated the fact that there were two distinctively different races of people living at Chichén Itzá during the pre-Columbian period. It was their opinion that in the production of those murals the ancient artists had endeavored to depict and emphasize the racial characteristics and distinctions between the white and dark-skinned people, attempting to give an exact representation of the colors of both races. The writers also concluded that the murals represented a sea battle between the two races, the dark-skinned warriors being victorious over the fair-skinned ones. In speaking of the dark-skinned Maya people that were found in Yucatán at the time of the Spanish conquest, the writers stated: "It is difficult, however, to reconcile all

²²Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff* (Salt Lake City, 1916), pp. 521-522.

²³Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson, *The Civilization of the Mayas* (Chicago, Ill., 1953), p. 20, dates the erection of New Chichén Itzá from A.D. 968 to 987, and Dr. Morley, *op. cit.*, p. 81, states that Chichén Itzá was reoccupied in 968 A.D.

of these physical qualities with a member of the race";²⁴ and then the writers continued, "the painter in depicting the hair and skin with such care in order to contrast them with their black-painted armed captors evidently had some notion of a distinct physical difference in his two sets of actors."²⁵

The authors also stated:

However, . . . the fair-haired white folk are certainly suffering reverses in battle. One is being grasped by the hair and his face is fittingly distorted by unpleasant emotion. Another has his arms bound rudely behind his back. A third is being dragged backward over the prow into a canoe.²⁶

And then, speaking of the fair-skinned race, they continued:

. . . The latter type [white race] is altogether significant. Quite obviously the painter is stressing an acute dissimilarity between his own people and those of another sort. The long-flowing, yellow hair, interwoven with green beads, so painstakingly delineated in the scene as well as in that of the human sacrifice, is undoubtedly meant to emphasize a difference of tribe, or even of race. . . . Just what this unusual disparity of type may mean is purely a matter of conjecture, but it cannot help but bring to mind legends rife throughout the American continent concerning the fair skin and golden hair of a mythical race. If the picture is a historical record, speculation would become even more interesting.²⁷

The murals on the walls of the Temple of the Warriors could be a representation of historical events at Chichén Itzá when white and dark races were at war with each other and when the white people were in bondage. Or perhaps they refer back to ancient historical events which occurred in the days of the Nephite and Lamanite ancestors of the Mayas, since the Book of Mormon tells the story of the former (white people) engaging in numerous wars with the latter (dark-colored people) and on certain occasions being in bondage to them.²⁸ It matters little which it may be, since either constitutes valid Book of Mormon evidence.

MURALS DEPICTING WHITE AND DARK PEOPLES AT TEOTIHUACAN

Murals depicting white and dark peoples have also been discovered at Teotihuacán north of Mexico City. Since there is considerable evidence confirming the viewpoint that the early settlers

²⁴E. H. Morris, J. Charlot, and A. A. Morris, *The Temple of the Warriors at Chichén Itzá, Yucatán*. Carnegie Institution, Publ. No. 46. (Washington, D. C., 1931), p. 444.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 444.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 402.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p.402.

²⁸Mosiah, chapters 19-22, pp. 170-178; 23-24, pp. 178-182.



Fig. 88: TEMPLE OF THE WARRIORS MURAL

Mural paintings from the Temple of the Warriors at Chichén Itzá, Yucatán. The mural shows a battle between white and dark-colored people.

of Mexico, the Toltecs (Nephites),²⁹ as well as the settlers on the Gulf of Mexico, the Olmecs (Mulekites),³⁰ were white people,³¹ and living beside them were the dark-skinned Lamanites, it is not surprising to find at Teotihuacán murals portraying these various races. Much evidence is available (to be presented later) which shows that some white people survived along with their darker-skinned associates in the valley of Mexico from ancient times down to the time of the Spanish conquest.

As additional evidence from the artists of ancient Teotihuacán, they not only painted murals depicting white and dark people, but they also portrayed on their murals white and dark hands, distinctly and artistically shown.

When these murals were first uncovered, the paint was well-preserved and the colors were brilliant. Exposure to the air and light during the past few years has dimmed them considerably.

MURALS DEPICTING WHITE AND DARK PEOPLE AT UAXACTUN AND MAYA DATES

In addition to the marvelous murals discovered at Bonampak, at Chichén Itzá, and at Teotihuacán, other murals depicting white and dark-colored peoples were discovered a number of years ago at other archaeological sites. None of these murals, however, were as artistically executed as those of Bonampak. One of the important discoveries of murals depicting white and dark people was at Uaxactún (Wásh-äck-toon'), Guatemala.

In order to arrive at an understanding regarding the possible time of the painting of these murals, and to ascertain the approximate period when the city of Uaxactún was founded, we should present briefly the interpretations of scholars regarding the ancient Maya dating system.

There are two systems of interpreting Maya dates. The one is the Spinden correlation formula, and the other is termed the Goodman-Martinez Hernandez-Thompson correlation formula. The Spinden correlation places the dates 260 years earlier than does the

²⁹Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon* (Oakland, 1950), pp. 162-174, 240, 244-245.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 247.

³¹Harold I. Velt, *America's Lost Civilizations* (Independence, Mo., 1949), p. 84; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *Native Races* (New York, 1875), vol. 5, pp. 202-203.



—Photograph by Dr. S. L. Wright

Fig. 89: TEOTIHUACAN MURAL

Mural on the walls of an ancient building at Teotihuacán, Mexico, showing white hands.

latter correlation formula. Many scholars, however, use the latter dating system.

The ancient Mayas erected tall monuments of stone called stelae on which they carved dates, other historical data, and usually the likeness of one of their principal citizens or gods.

The late Dr. Sylvanus G. Morley, who used the Goodman-Martinez Hernandez-Thompson correlation formula, stated:

The earliest, surely contemporaneous date in the Maya hieroglyphic writing is that engraved on the back of the Leyden Plate, a small celt-like object of jade, eight and one-half inches long by three inches wide, found near Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, in 1864; this records the Maya date . . . corresponding to 320 of the Christian Era.³²

According to Dr. Spinden's correlation formula, instead of the

³²Sylvanus G. Morley, *The Ancient Maya* (Palo Alto, 1947), p. 43; J. Eric S. Thompson, *The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization* (Norman, Okla., 1955), p. 252.

Leyden Plate containing a date of 320 A.D., when adjusted to our system of recording time, the date would read 60 A.D.

Although the Leyden Plate was discovered near Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, Dr. Morley was of the opinion that it was carved at Tikal, a large ancient Maya city which lies approximately fifteen miles south of Uaxactún,³³ both places being situated in the northern jungles of Guatemala.

Evidence indicates that the ancient city of Uaxactún was established during Book of Mormon times. According to Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson, one of the world's outstanding Maya scholars and archaeologists, the ancient Mayas were living at Uaxactún at least by the time of the early Christian centuries. He points out that:

. . . we know that when the early surviving dated monument (Stela 9) was erected, these figures had already come into use. This stela records in dreadfully eroded glyphs the equivalent in the Maya calendar (according to the most generally accepted correlation) of April 9, A.D. 328. It was still standing, although very much the worse for wear when the late Maya scholar Sylvanus Morley found it in 1916, nearly sixteen hundred years after its erection.³⁴

Dr. Thompson continued by explaining that Stela 9 was sitting on the top of an older one which the Mayas had used as its base. He stated that these people had developed what he termed ". . . the stela cult and dated hieroglyphics some 350 years earlier than the earliest surely dated Maya inscription (the Leyden Plate) which still survives."³⁵ Since Dr. Thompson dates the Leyden Plate at 320 A.D., 350 years earlier would be 30 B.C. Spinden's correlation would place the date at 290 B.C.

Since the date of 328 A.D. (Spinden's correlation being 68 A.D.) was carved on Stela 9 at Uaxactún by the inhabitants of that city, which date was either 72 or 332 years before the close of the Book of Mormon period, the Nephite nation having come to an end approximately 400 A.D., it is definite that Uaxactún was inhabited during Book of Mormon times. The late Dr. Sylvanus G. Morley and other outstanding archaeologists maintain that some of the earliest Maya settlements could have been founded at least as early as 300 B.C.³⁶ Dr. Spinden's dating system would place them much earlier.

³³Morley, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

³⁴Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 50.

³⁶Morley, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

To quote Dr. Morley:

. . . The Early Period of the Old Maya Empire is thus regarded here as having extended from A.D. 317 to 633, a little more than three centuries. . . . For a number of centuries prior to 317 it is obvious that the ancient Maya had been accumulating cultural experience to the point where they finally were able to carve their stone monuments. Perhaps as early as the fourth or third century B.C. they had begun to carve monuments out of wood.³⁷

The exact date of the founding of Uaxactún is not known, and so if one should give a date when this ancient city was first settled it would be pure speculation; however, evidence indicates that it



Fig. 90: REPRODUCTION OF PAINTING ON MAYA CERAMIC VASE

Decoration on a vase showing people of two different colors. This classical example of Maya ceramics was discovered at Alta Verapaz, Guatemala.

could have been founded even before Christ appeared to the inhabitants of ancient America.

Whether the murals depicting white and dark peoples at Uaxactún were painted during the Book of Mormon period or later makes no particular difference regarding their value. During either period white and dark peoples, known anciently as Nephites and

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 52.

Lamanites, were living in America; therefore, the artist who painted the murals was merely depicting the two races of people with which he was familiar.

In addition to murals depicting white and dark peoples at Uaxactún, the Mayas have decorated their ceramics with similar depictions. A classical example of decoration in Maya ceramics is the vase which was discovered at Alta Verapaz, Guatemala.

FAMOUS ANCIENT MAYA CALENDAR AND DATING SYSTEM

Since a brief explanation of the Maya dating system has been given, and since a statement regarding the erection of stelae by this ancient people has been made, it should be appropriate at this point to present a brief sketch of the Maya calendar and its possible relationship to Book of Mormon history. Perhaps no people of antiquity developed a more astounding and accurate calendar and dating system than did the ancient Mayas. The following statement made by Dr. Herbert J. Spinden, one of America's outstanding Maya archaeologists and scholars, gives dates from the Maya calendar which are intensely interesting and important to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. To quote:

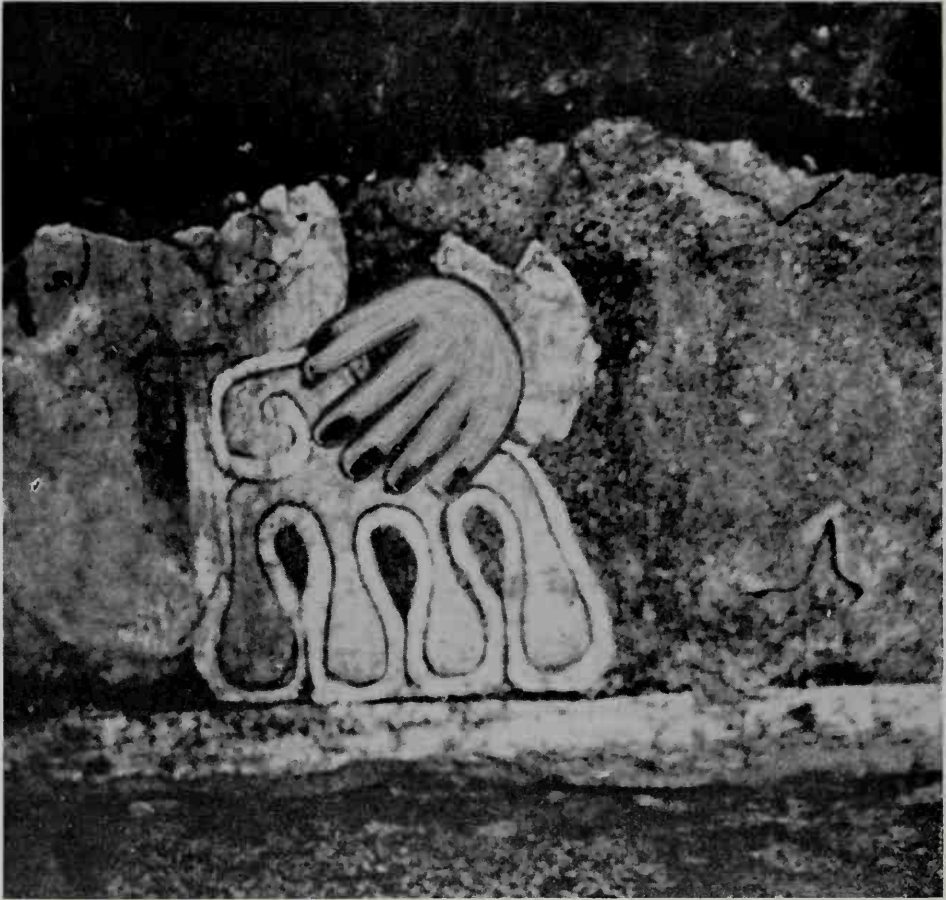
Now Mayan history does not reach back to the zero date which must be regarded as a theoretical beginning of Mundane Era. The earliest object with contemporary date is the Tuxtla Statuette with May 16, 98 B.C. It appears however, that the really historic beginning of the day count was 7.0.0.0.0., 10 Ahua 18 Zac, August 6, 613 B.C. The calendar of months was probably inaugurated in 580 B.C. when O Pop, New Year's day, coincided with the winter solstice.³⁸

Students of the Book of Mormon will readily recall that the record claims that Lehi and his colony left Jerusalem 600 B.C. to begin their historic journey toward America, the "Promised Land."³⁹ It is evident that 600 B.C. corresponds rather closely to the date of 613 B.C., and so that date on the Maya calendar could represent the time of the departure of the progenitors of the inhabitants of ancient America from the Holy Land. Since Spinden maintains that the calendar of months was probably inaugurated in 580 B.C., that date could be the exact time that Nephi inaugurated the calendar for his people after the arrival of Lehi's colony on the Western Hemi-

³⁸Herbert J. Spinden, *Ancient Civilizations of Mexico and Central America*. Handbook Series No. 2, American Museum of Natural History (New York, 1922), p. 136.

³⁹1 Nephi 17:13.

sphere. Scholars have observed the close similarities between the Egyptian calendar and that of the Mayas. It is a well-known fact that the Nephites brought much Egyptian culture with them to America, even writing some of their records in the Egyptian language.⁴⁰ Nephi could have used the Egyptian calendar as the basis



—*Photograph by Dr. S. L. Wright*

Fig. 91: TEOTIHUACAN MURAL

Mural on wall of an ancient building at Teotihuacán, Mexico, showing a white hand.

for creating a calendar for his people by making such alterations as eighteen months of twenty days each and five extra days instead of twelve months of approximately thirty days each as used in the

⁴⁰Mosiah 1:4; 9:32.

Gregorian calendar. Both the Gregorian calendar, the one we have inherited, and the one the Mayas used made adjustments for the extra fraction of a day each year.

CONCLUSIONS

In the evidence that has been presented, the author has attempted to show that white and dark-skinned peoples—Nephites and Lamanites—lived in ancient America and that many of the white people escaped death at the close of the Book of Mormon period.

Since the information is not available, it is impossible to state definitely the exact number of Nephites who denied Christ and joined the Lamanites; and yet it is probable (judging from the large number of white peoples in various parts of ancient America following the close of Book of Mormon history) that a considerable number survived the last great war. There is much evidence in the Book of Mormon, as has been presented, that such would be the case.

The murals depicting white and dark-skinned peoples described in this chapter were painted at various times during the several centuries which followed Nephite history. Perhaps the earliest of them—the ones at Uaxactún—could date near Book of Mormon times. According to the opinions of archaeologists, those at Bonampak were painted from two to four hundred years after the close of Nephite history. The murals at Teotihuacán were produced sometime during the first several Christian centuries; and the murals at Chichén Itzá date approximately six hundred years after Moroni hid the records in Hill Cumorah. These murals supply valid evidence that white people persisted in ancient America throughout the decades following the close of the Book of Mormon period; otherwise the ancient artists would have had no valid reason for depicting such peoples in their paintings.

The numerous predictions of the Nephite prophets proclaiming that a remnant of their people would persist in the land forever combine with those murals to give an abundance of evidence that dark and white peoples lived in ancient America, as is claimed in the Nephite records. The post-Book of Mormon evidence shows that white people persisted until the coming of the Spaniards. Certainly

the Prophet Joseph Smith would have had no knowledge of all these evidences when, "under the inspiration of God," he translated the Book of Mormon and gave to the world the story of the Nephites (white people) and the Lamanites (bronze-skinned race). Thus in conclusion the writer maintains that the ancient Nephites are at least partially accountable for the white peoples who inhabited America between the dates of 421 A.D. and the discovery of America in 1492 A.D.

CHAPTER 9

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCES OF WHITE AND DARK PEOPLE ANCIENTLY

IXTLILXOCHITL'S CLAIM OF WHITE PEOPLE COLONIZING ANCIENT AMERICA

In addition to the murals depicting white and dark-colored people, considerable documentary evidence has been preserved which supports the claim that white people lived in ancient America; for example, in approximately 1600 A.D. Ixtlilxochitl (Eesh-tleel-sho-cheetl'), an Indian of a royal family who lived near the city of Mexico, wrote a history of his progenitors.⁴¹ This Indian prince, maintaining that his ancestors were white people, claimed that they came to Mexico in three different migrations from beyond the sea. He said that the first group ". . . were of those of the division of Babylon," and that they came to America from ". . . the very high tower," no doubt meaning the Tower of Babel.⁴² The fact should be remembered that the Book of Mormon makes the claim that the first group of colonizers, the Jaredites, came from the Tower of Babel;⁴³ therefore, Ixtlilxochitl's account and that found in the Nephites' history are in complete agreement.

The Indian prince also stated that two groups of people crossed the sea and settled in the Western Hemisphere.⁴⁴ This claim is also in harmony with one made by the Book of Mormon regarding the Nephites and Mulekites.⁴⁵

WHITE PEOPLE AMONG THE TOLTECS IN THE VALLEY OF MEXICO

Not only does Ixtlilxochitl claim that the ancestors of the Indians were white people, but he also maintains that throughout the entire period following the last great war which, in agreement with the Book of Mormon, took place during the latter part of the fourth

⁴¹*Works of Ixtlilxochitl*, cited in Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon* (Oakland, Calif., 1950), pp. 1-450. Note: The numbering of the footnotes continues consecutively from the previous chapter.

⁴²*Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

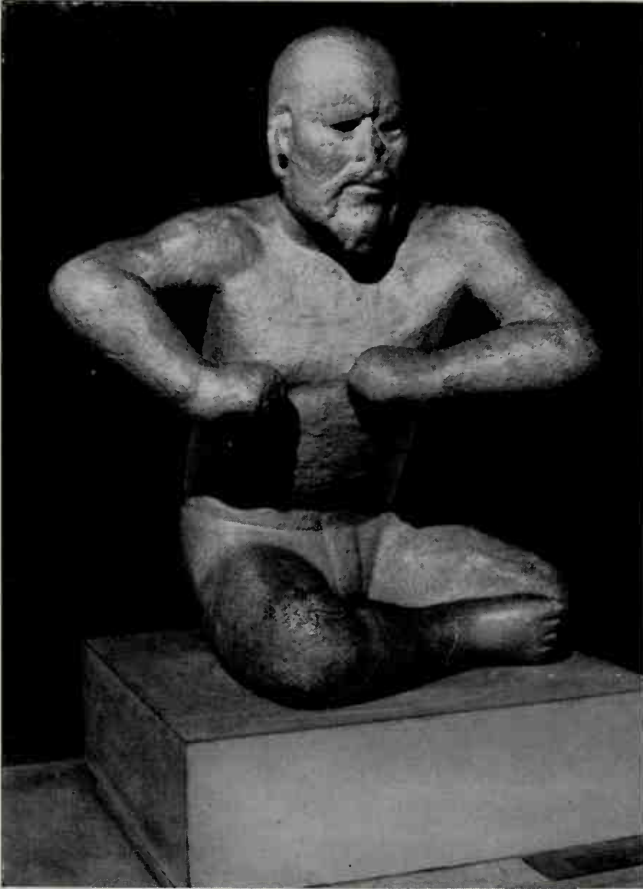
⁴³Ether 1:1-43.

⁴⁴Hunter and Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 55ff.; pp. 121ff.

⁴⁵1 Nephi, chapters 1-18; Omni 1:15-16; Helaman 6:10; 8:21.

century,⁴⁶ Toltec white descendants of these ancient peoples continued to live in the valley of Mexico and in Yucatán until the coming of Columbus and the Spanish conquest.⁴⁷ He claimed that the Toltec kings were white and bearded. To quote: “*These kings were high of stature, and white, and bearded like the Spaniards. . .*”⁴⁸

Documentary evidence indicates that strains of white blood still remained in the Toltec peoples of the valley of Mexico during



Olmec stone statue of a man with a beard, National Museum of Mexico.

Fig. 92: OLMEC STATUE OF BEARDED MAN

Fig. 93: REPRODUCTION OF BONAMPAK MURAL

Photo page 210: Photograph showing white, dark-colored and black people is a reproduction of a mural from the end of one of the rooms of the “Temple of the Painted Walls” at Bonampak, Mexico. Observe the stocking cap which one of the white men is wearing.

⁴⁶Mormon, chapters 3-6, pp. 463-471; Hunter and Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 347-365.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 382.

⁴⁸*Ixtlilxochitl*, cited in Hunter and Ferguson, *idem.*, p. 240.

the tenth century A.D. The white blood was apparently gradually diluted as years passed until the arrival of the Europeans in the sixteenth century. Ixtlilxochitl, in delineating the events of the tenth century, states that

. . . during the first days they found a child on a hill. It was very white and blond and beautiful . . . and from that time forth there was a law that wherever a child was born that was very white and blond, when it was five years of age it was right away sacrificed. This law lasted until the coming of the Spaniards.⁴⁹

Modern scholars and writers accept Ixtlilxochitl's statements and other documentary sources regarding white and dark peoples in Mexico anciently as being true; for example, James Churchwood wrote:

In Mexico there is a very ancient Aztec tradition which says "the first settlers in Mexico were a white race." The tradition continues, saying, "This white race was conquered by a race with darker skins, and the darker skinned race drove the white race from the land."⁵⁰

Harold I. Velt pointed out that the early Toltecs, the founders of the early civilization in Mexico and adjacent regions, "were white people, according to the Mexican account."⁵¹

In a number of places in his writings, Hubert Howe Bancroft spoke of two colors of races among the inhabitants of Mexico and Guatemala in ancient times; for example, he wrote: "All seemed to have spoken one language, and to have lived in great peace, black men and white men together."⁵² In another place he maintained that the Olmecs (Öl-mecs) who lived on the Gulf Coast of Mexico were *originally a white people*. Later, however, they were mixed with a darker-skinned or yellow-skinned people.⁵³

PRE-COLUMBIAN MEXICAN CODICES PORTRAYING LIGHT HAIR AND BEARDS

It is a well-known fact that the Catholic *padres* burned practically all of the numerous handwritten codices or books which fell into their hands during the period of the Spanish conquest of Mexico. A few codices, however, escaped destruction. From them, according to Thor Heyerdahl,

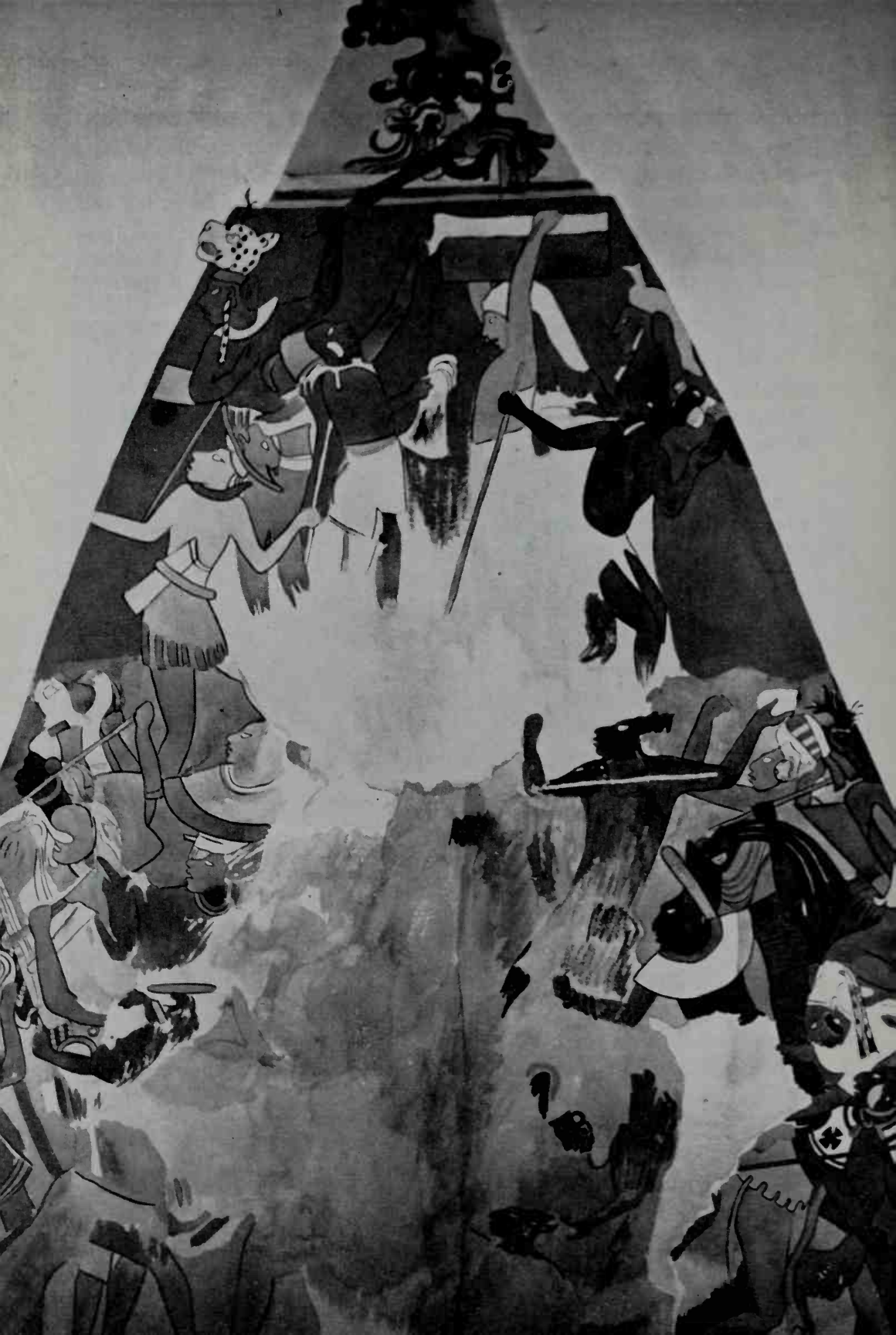
⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 382.

⁵⁰James Churchwood, *The Lost Continent* (New York, 1931), p. 272.

⁵¹Harold I. Velt, *America's Lost Civilizations* (1949), p. 84.

⁵²Hubert Howe Bancroft, *Native Races*, vol. 5, pp. 202-203, 547.

⁵³*Ibid.*, pp. 202-203.



... we learn that the idea of light hair and beard did not enter America with Columbus. Thus, in the *Tonalamatl* of the Aubin collection—a pre-Columbian codex preserved in the National Library in Paris—the aboriginal Mexican authors have left us with multicoloured hand-paintings of former heroes and deities. Of some 275 human heads with their hair clearly drawn, more than a hundred appear with hair of a light brown colour, the rest having black or very dark hair.⁵⁴

TENTH-CENTURY WHITE MAN, TOPILTZIN, BUILDER OF NEW CHICHEN ITZA

We read in the *Works of Ixtlilxochitl* about a tenth-century king or nobleman, named Topiltzin, who sometimes was called by the name of the Mexican God Quetzalcoatl, or its Maya counterpart Kukulcan (Koo-kul-con'), because he was a priest or worshiper of the "White Bearded God." He was a white man with a long-flowing beard, who lived in the valley of Mexico.⁵⁵

Enemy peoples defeated him in battle and forced him from the country. Topiltzin (To-peelt'-seen) and his Toltec associates united with the Mayas and, under the leadership of Topiltzin, built the New Maya Empire. The principal cities that this bearded white man from Mexico is said to have built were New Chichén Itzá and Mayapan.⁵⁶

The principal temple erected at Chichén Itzá, sometimes called *El Castillo*, was named Kukulcan in honor of this tenth-century builder and white ruler of Chichén Itzá. His likeness was carved on one of the door jambs of the temple, a photograph of which is reproduced here. It takes no more than a casual glance at this bearded, white Kukulcan to convince one that he was not a beardless Indian but a white man. Observe the profile line of his nose and the heavy growth of the beard. The feathers of the quetzal bird protrude gracefully from his headdress, indicating that he was a priest of the "Bearded White God" or Jesus Christ, symbolized by the quetzal.

WHITE AND DARK MAYAS IN PRE-COLUMBIAN TIMES

The *Popol Vuh*, a document written by a Quiché Maya Indian at Chichicastenango in the highlands of Guatemala between the

⁵⁴Thor Heyerdahl, *American Indians in the Pacific* (Stockholm, 1952), p. 286.

⁵⁵Hunter and Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 390-395.

⁵⁶Alfred M. Tozzer, *Landa's Relación de Las Cosas de Yucatán* (1941 ed.), pp. 20-26; Gaspar Antonio Chi, cited in M. Wells Jakeman, *The Origin and History of the Mayas* (Salt Lake City, 1945), pp. 95-96.



—*Photograph by Thomas Stuart Ferguson*

Fig. 94: BEARDED KUKULCAN OR TOPILTZIN

Likeness of the white, bearded Kukulcan or Topiltzin, tenth-century Toltec ruler of Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, Mexico, carved on a door jamb of the temple atop the Pyramid of Kukulcan, Chichén Itzá.

years 1554-1558 A.D., mentioned the fact that there were "white men" among the Old-World inhabitants whence came their ancestors. To quote: "There were then, in great numbers, the black men and the *white men*, men of many classes, men of many tongues, that it was wonderful to hear them."⁵⁷

The founder of the ancient Maya city of *Mutul* in Yucatán was named *Zac Mutul*, his name meaning "white man."⁵⁸ "Since the city was founded centuries before the coming of Europeans, it is apparent that the name was descriptive of the man. *Zac* is the Maya word for 'white.' Amazing enough the Hebrew word 'white' is identical to the Maya-Zac!"⁵⁹

Edward Herbert Thompson, the American who purchased Chichén Itzá and dredged the Sacred Well, gives an account of a white race of people living with a dark-skinned race in Yucatán. His statements are in harmony with the mural paintings at Chichén Itzá. Thompson points out that

. . . the legends of the primitive races of Yucatán and portions of Mexico tell . . . of a fair-skinned race of men who became the rulers and the leaders of the dark-skinned aborigines. . . .⁶⁰

He also wrote:

The dark-skinned race took the light-skinned people to be their guides and teachers; and all went well with them under the sage counsels and wise teachings of the Chanes. The indigenous race was raised from an almost brutish, savage condition to the status of thinking people.⁶¹

Farther on in his book Thompson quotes the following from a document written by the natives of Yucatán, the Mayas. To quote:

"In ancient times," said Ah Kin Chan, "my fathers, the Chanes of Nonoual, the People of the Serpent, found the dark-skinned savage Mayas living in damp caves and forests, eating roots and crawling things, more like beasts than men. Then my fathers, the light-skinned Wise Men, took the dark forest people and bound them with fetters of fear and love, raised them to the light of day. Even the Chanes, the wise men of Nonoual, led the Mayas in their great advances."⁶²

⁵⁷*Popol Vuh* (English tr. by Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley, Norman, Okla., 1950), p. 172.

⁵⁸M. Wells Jakeman, *Origins and History of the Mayas* (1950), p. 182, citing Martin de Palomar, *Relacion de Mutul* (1898 edition), p. 77; Tozzer (1941), note 128.

⁵⁹Hunter and Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

⁶⁰Edward Herbert Thompson, *People of the Serpent* (New York, 1953), p. 75.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 228.

The foregoing quotation seems to indicate that the dark-skinned people were the original settlers of Yucatán. The following information drawn from various sources will show that the conclusion is incorrect. The dark-colored people in Yucatán described by the Maya writer quoted by Edward Herbert Thompson were composed of that faction of the populace which had survived when the original white settlers were killed or overthrown from their position of leadership. With the loss of the more intelligent and educated portion of the population composed primarily of white people, and the intermarriage of the dark-skinned people with the few whites who survived, the people lapsed into an even lower stage of barbarism and ignorance than had previously been known.

A number of years later a new group of white people from the valley of Mexico and what is now the state of Chiapas came to Yucatán, took control of the dark-skinned natives, and became their teachers and rulers. As previously pointed out, history tells of Topiltzin and his Mexican or Toltec associates from the valley of Mexico and the Itzá people from Chiapas invading and capturing Yucatán. Perhaps the quotation given by Thompson refers to this particular conquest when the light-skinned "Wise Men" became the teachers of the "dark forest people." Before we discuss this phase of Maya history in Yucatán, however, we shall describe the colonizing of that country originally by the first white settlers of which we have knowledge.

As the following evidence will show, according to available documents the Mayas of the Classic Period, a white race, were the original settlers of Yucatán. Dates carved on stelae indicate that at least they were there not many years after the close of the Book of Mormon period, and perhaps they arrived some time earlier than the dated monuments indicate. The carvings on the stelae and buildings of Old Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, of bearded men who were clothed in long robes plainly show that those people were not Indians but definitely white men. They were white Mayas, direct descendants of the Nephites; in fact, that race could have colonized Yucatán during the Book of Mormon days. The ancient Nephite record

Opposite page: 

Fig. 95: WHITE AND DARK PEOPLE, BONAMPAK MURAL

Photograph showing white and dark-colored people is a reproduction of a mural from the "Temple of the Painted Walls" at Bonampak, Mexico. Observe the clothing of jaguar skins, symbol of royalty or leadership among the ancient Mayas, worn by two of the white men.



plainly shows that whenever its people colonized any region their dark-skinned kinsmen, the Lamanites, soon were there also. Thus historical evidence indicates that perhaps there would have been both colors of people—white and dark—in Yucatán from the time of its first colonization regardless of whether it was settled during Book of Mormon times or following the destruction of the Nephite nation.

During the ninth and tenth centuries, the Old Maya Empire or Classic Period suddenly went into decay. "Most of the Maya cities of Yucatán and Campeche seem to have been abandoned at the same time as those of the Central area or not long thereafter."⁶³ Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson, the famous Maya scholar, suggested that the decay in the Classic Period came about through the overthrow of the ruling priestly class by the unlearned common people who had been forced to supply so much slave labor in the extensive building program. To quote:

. . . In my opinion, . . . in city after city the ruling group was driven out or, more probably, massacred by the dependent peasants, and power then passed to peasant leaders and small-town witch doctors. The building program and the erection of stelae ceased abruptly, but the people still repaired to the ceremonial centers for certain religious services and perhaps for markets, but the buildings, no longer kept up, gradually fell into disrepair. Vegetation began to invade the courts and terraces and to lodge on the roofs of buildings.⁶⁴

During the century following the end of the Classic Period, a big invasion of foreigners came into Yucatán.⁶⁵ As previously mentioned, they were led by the white king Topiltzin and his associates from Mexico.⁶⁶ Perhaps the entire group was composed of white people; at least the leaders were. The invaders became the ruling class, the priests and the teachers of the dark-skinned, ignorant natives. The religion of Quetzalcoatl was emphasized. New Chichén Itzá came into existence, with its temples and stelae elaborately decorated with serpents and quetzal feathers—symbols of the "White Bearded God"—Quetzalcoatl.

Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson described the conquest of Yucatán by Topiltzin and the Itzá people as follows:

From various sources we learn that the Itzá, who were foreigners and spoke broken Maya, settled at Chichén Itzá in the twenty years between A.D.

⁶³J. Eric S. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 98-100.

967 and A.D. 987, . . . and we also learn that Kukulcan [Topiltzin], "the feathered serpent," who was a Mexican leader, seized Chichén Itzá. Bishop Landa, our best Spanish source on Maya life, says, "The Indians are of the opinion that with the Itzá who settled Chichén Itzá there reigned a great lord called Cuculcan [Kukulcan] . . . and they say that he entered from the west, and they differ as to whether he entered before or after the Itzá, or with them."⁶⁷

Dr. Thompson concluded:

. . . we can feel fairly sure that Kukulcan was the leader of the Itzá invasion which seized Chichén Itzá in the Maya katun 4 Ahau which ended in A.D. 987, and introduced Toltec religion, Toltec architecture, and Toltec art.⁶⁸

WHITE AND DARK PEOPLE IN THE ANDEAN REGION IN ANCIENT TIMES

There is considerable evidence to the effect that in faraway Bolivia and Peru in South America the predecessors of the Indians were a white people whose men were bearded. William H. Prescott, after having analyzed the early Spanish documents and manuscripts in the archives of the Royal Academy of History at Madrid, wrote his conclusions as follows:

The story of the bearded white men finds its place in most of their [Andean Indians'] legends. . .

Another legend speaks of certain white and bearded men, who, advancing from the shores of Lake Titicaca (Tee-tee-cä'-cä), established an ascendancy over the natives, and imparted to them the blessings of civilization. It may remind us of the tradition existing among the Aztecs in respect to Quetzalcoatl, the good deity, who with a similar garb and aspect came up the great plateau from the east on a similar benevolent mission to the natives. . . .⁶⁹

Dr. Daniel G. Brinton, the collector of numerous Indian traditions during the past century and the author of several books, wrote:

Just as in Mexico, the natives attributed the erection of buildings, the history of which had been lost, to the white Toltecs, the subjects of Quetzalcoatl, so in Peru various ancient ruins, whose builders had been lost to memory, were pointed out to the Spaniards as the work of a white and bearded race who held the country in possession long before the Incas had founded their dynasty.⁷⁰

The ancient archaeological ruins of Tiahuanaco (Tee-a-wahn-ah'-cō) in the Bolivian plains south of Lake Titicaca, containing mar-

⁶⁷J. Eric S. Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁶⁹William H. Prescott, *Conquest of Peru* (Philadelphia, 1881), vol. 1, p. 9.

⁷⁰Daniel G. Brinton, *American Hero Myths*, p. 188.

velous prehistoric monuments and architecture of very impressive dimensions, give evidence that its builders had attained a high cultural level, a level much higher than that reached by the Inca and his people whose extensive empire was captured by the Spaniards. The Inca and his Indian subjects informed the Spanish *conquistadores* that the ruined site of Tiahuanaco with its marvelous edifices had been originally constructed by a race of white bearded men who had preceded the time of the first Inca.

A noted Spanish chronicler, Cieza de Leon, who wrote between 1553 to 1560, was one of the earliest Europeans to visit the ruins of Tiahuanaco on the Titicaca plateau and to collect prehistoric traditions from the local Indian natives. Since he was an eyewitness to the events immediately following the Spanish conquest, Cieza's testimony is naturally very important. His narrative represents the first recorded description of that archaeological site. To quote:

I asked the natives, in the presence of Juan Vargas, who is one of the leading authorities over them, if these buildings had been constructed at the time of the Incas. They laughed at this question, affirming . . . that they had been made long before they ruled, but that they could not state or affirm who made them, but that they heard from their forebears that what is seen now was made one night. For this reason also because they say they have seen bearded men on the island of Titicaca and that the building of Vinaque had been constructed by similar men, I say that perhaps it may be that before the Incas reigned, there may have been some people of intelligence in these realms come from some parts not known, who have done these things, and they being few in number and the natives many, they might have been killed in wars.⁷¹

Speaking of the "great and very ancient buildings" on the river Vinaque, Cieza wrote:

When I questioned the neighbouring Indians as to who had made that monument of antiquity, they answered that it was another people who had been bearded and white like ourselves, who they say came to these parts a long time before the Incas reigned, and made their residence there.⁷²

The following is quoted from Thor Heyerdahl's recent book, *American Indians in the Pacific*:

Cieza . . . stated that several Colla Indians had informed him how at the remote time of the great chiefs Vapana and Cari, who ruled before the establishment of the early Incan dynasty, "white and bearded men" had been massacred on the largest island in Lake Titicaca. Cieza returns to the same

⁷¹Cieza de Leon, cited in Thor Heyerdahl, *American Indians in the Pacific* (London, 1952), p. 231.

⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 232.

pre-Inca people in his Second Part, saying: "They also tell what I have written in the First Part, that on the island of Titicaca, in the past centuries that there was a bearded people white like us, . . ."⁷³

Thor Heyerdahl points out that

In 1863, Bollaerta wrote in his paper on "The Pre-Incal Ruins of Tiahuanaco": "There are vague traditions that Tiahuanaco was built by white and bearded men." Describing the same ancient ruins, Inwards (1884) states with Humboldt that ". . . at the arrival of the Spaniards the natives attributed the construction of [Tiahuanaco] to a race of white and bearded men who inhabited the ridge of the Cordilleras long before the foundation of the empire of the Incas."⁷⁴

Heyerdahl reported that during his visit to Peru in 1947 he was informed by Dr. Luis Valcarcel of the Museo Nacional in Lima that the Indian tribes near Ayacucho, in the Cordilleras between Lima and Cuzco, had until recent years maintained the tradition from the time of Cieza that white and bearded men had lived in that region and had built the pre-Inca archaeological structures.⁷⁵

In 1910 an archaeologist named Bandeliar went to the ancient ruins on Titicaca Island in the lake near Tiahuanaco to carry forward excavations. He found that the ancient tradition of "bearded white men" was still prevalent among the Indian aborigines. One of them, an "old native wizard," informed him that in very ancient times the island was inhabited by gentlemen (*caballeros*) similar to the Viracochas, the name given to whites by the Indians today.⁷⁶

CONCLUSIONS

The documentary evidences presented in this chapter—which have come to us from Indian traditions, Indian historians such as Ixtlilxochitl, and early Catholic *padres*—and the discoveries made and the work accomplished by archaeologists and anthropologists, show definitely that among the colonizers of ancient America there were white people whose men were bearded. Evidence indicates that these white people established the early cultures of Mexico, Central America, and the Andean region. The material presented in this chapter corroborates the claims made by the Nephite historians and thereby constitutes valid and valuable Book of Mormon evidence.

⁷³*Ibid.*, p. 231.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, p. 236.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 231.

CHAPTER 10

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCES OF WHITE AND DARK PEOPLE ANCIENTLY

NEPHITE OR HEBRAIC ANCESTRY OF WHITE MAYAS

It is a well-known fact that on the temples at Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, appear many pre-Columbian stone carvings of bearded or whiskered men. A. Hyatt Verrill, referring to the “City of the Serpents”—dedicated by the Mayas to Kukulcan—wrote:

. . . its “Temple of the Jaguars” surpasses any other known prehistoric structure in its beauty of design, its impressive carvings, its magnificent coloring and its wonderful frescoes. . . . Among the innumerable bas-reliefs, which cover both the exterior and the interior of the temple, are many figures of bearded men. It has been suggested that these represent priests of Kukulcan or the “Plumed-Serpent-god,” who was always depicted with a beard, the supposition being that his priests either wore real beards or donned artificial ones. But is it not equally probable that these bearded figures represent those mysterious “white bearded ones” who, according to Mayan, Aztec and Incan legends, visited America ages before the coming of the Spaniards? There is a remarkable frequency of bearded gods and figures in both Mayan and Aztec sculptures and art. . . .¹

The archaeologist Dr. Gregory Mason, in his book *South of Yesterday*, stated, “Maya sculpture showing bearded men, in the attitude of conquerors, led Dr. George Vaillant to suggest that a bearded race ruled these lands before the ascendancy of the Mayas.”² It should be recalled that the Nephites and their progenitors, the Hebrews, were races whose men had heavy growths of hair on their faces and wore beards, while the Indians had very little hair on their faces and as a general rule did not wear beards. To quote Dr. Sylvanus G. Morley:

The Maya are not hairy people. The men either have no beards and moustaches at all, or only very meager, sparse ones, while other parts of their body have less hair than in the case of American whites.³

The Book of Mormon record claims that the Hebrews, a bearded people, were among the progenitors of the American Indians.

¹A. Hyatt Verrill, *Old Civilizations of the New World* (New York, 1929), p. 137.

²Gregory Mason, *South of Yesterday* (New York, 1940), p. 137.

³Sylvanus G. Morley, *The Ancient Maya*, p. 21.

Guatemala
National
Museum



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 96: MAYA STONE STATUE OF BEARDED MAN

Dr. Gregory Mason also, in his book *Ancient Cities and Modern Tribes*, described the two races of people who lived side by side in ancient America and constituted the Maya society. I maintain that these two races were white and dark in color and that they were the descendants of the Nephites and the Lamanites. To quote Dr. Mason:

More extended study of the Maya, especially of their sculptures in stone, figurines in pottery, skeletal remains from the ancient graves, and modern descendants, cannot fail, I think, to convince one that there were at least two separate and distinct races involved; the one, the ruling race, to which belonged the kings, nobles, and astronomer-priests, depicted upon the monuments throughout most of the larger ruined cities of the Old Empire, the other the workers or slaves, by far the more numerous, who, under the dominion of the ruling class, built those gigantic cities throughout this part of Central America, with their palaces and temples, courts, plazas, and sculptured monoliths, whose ruins, now buried in the depths of the primeval forests, are the wonder and admiration of all who have had the privilege of visiting them.

The faces of the priests and rulers are quite familiar to us sculptured on the monoliths of Copán, Quiriguá, Naranjo, Tikal, and Yaxchilán, and moulded in stucco at Palenque and other cities.

Considerable variation may be noticed amongst them, depending on the skill of the artist, the material from which they had been sculptured, and the period to which they belong; but, generally speaking, the type is fairly uniform throughout; the nose is Roman and narrow, the chin and brow somewhat receding, and the lips very prominent, the lower lip often protruding well beyond the upper.

The stelae from Copán show this type of face, and the outline of a head from one of the monuments at Ixkun exhibits it in profile. The type is found from one end of the Old Empire to the other, and in the majority of the cities is the only one handed down to posterity, for it must be obvious that, no matter how greatly the workers might outnumber the ruling classes, the heads of the former would never occupy a prominent position upon the sculpture.⁴

Dr. Mason came to the conclusion that the white ruling class among the ancient Mayas reminded him of Mediterranean peoples. He wrote:

To me their features are strongly reminiscent of those of the ancient Romans as one sees them portrayed in the marble statues of their best period; the same large, arched nose, firm mouth, and short chin are present in both.⁵

Other writers claim that the ancestors of the Mayas are Mediterranean people, but Jews instead of Romans; for example, Theodore Arthur Willard, after visiting Chichén Itzá and other archaeological Maya sites, came to the conclusion that the bearded men portrayed on their temples and stelae were strikingly Hebraic in appearance. To quote:

An interesting side light . . . is the distinctly Semitic cast of countenance of some of the ancient sculptures and murals found at Chichén Itzá and in

⁴Gregory Mason, *Ancient Cities and Modern Times* (New York, 1926), p. 236 ff.
⁵*Ibid.*, p. 245.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 97: BEARDED MEN, MERIDA, YUCATAN

...a figurines of bearded men in private museum of Alberto G. Marquez, Merida, Yucatán, Mexico.

other old Maya cities. The dignity of face and serene poise of these carved or painted likenesses is strikingly Hebraic.⁶

One of the best examples at Chichén Itzá of a bearded man which is definitely Semitic in appearance is on the wall of the building at the north end of the ball court. Since the carving is so interesting and distinctive, the building on which it stands is called the "Temple of the Bearded Man." Many similar representations of bearded men, definitely representing white men of Hebraic type, appear on the other buildings and stelae at Chichén Itzá.



—Photograph by Author

Fig. 98: BEARDED MAN AT CHICHEN ITZA

Hebraic-like bearded man on the Temple of the Bearded Man at Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, Mexico. Observe quetzal feathers connoting that he was a worshiper of Quetzalcoatl.

⁶Theodore Arthur Willard, *The City of the Sacred Well* (New York, 1926), p. 36.

Bishop Diego de Landa, a prominent Spanish missionary during the first century of the Spanish conquest in Yucatán, writing in about 1556, claimed that the Mayas were descendants of the Jews.⁷

HEBRAIC-LIKE PEOPLE DEPICTED THROUGHOUT MEXICO
AND CENTRAL AMERICA

At numerous places throughout Mexico and Central America portraits of bearded men have been discovered which definitely are



—Photograph: *Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.*

Fig. 99: BEARDED MAN OF ANCIENT VERA CRUZ, MEXICO

The profile of a bearded man carved on the back of a slate mirror from Vera Cruz, Mexico. This portrays a white man, and it was carved by a highly skilled artist. Note similarity to Egyptian art.

⁷Diego de Landa, *Relacion de Las Cosas de Yucatán* (Eng. tr. by Alfred M. Tozzer, 1941), p. 93.

not representations of the average American Indian but of a white race of people who preceded them in those places. One of the outstanding examples is the portrait of the aristocratic and beautiful bearded individual which was found in the country of the Totonac Indians, state of Vera Cruz, Mexico. It is at the present time housed in the American Museum of Natural History. This profile of a bearded man was carved on the back of a slate mirror. It represents an outstanding example of early American art. Anyone who examines it is easily convinced that it does not represent an Indian, but one of the early white inhabitants of Mexico.

An expedition under the direction of the National Geographic Society and the Smithsonian Institution discovered at Tres Zapotes, Vera Cruz, a clay head which was described as "one of the best examples of ceramic art yet found in the New World." The man represented in this clay figurine is wearing a sharply pointed beard and a stocking cap. The cap is similar to the type worn by the Jews in the Holy City at the time Lehi left Jerusalem. This Olmec figurine, dated at about the time of Christ, is housed in the National Museum of Mexico. It was excavated by Dr. Matthew W. Stirling in 1939-1940. The account of the discovery and a description of the figurine were published in the September, 1940, issue of the *National Geographic Magazine*.

In the words of Thor Heyerdahl, "Such a vividly presented race-type is not the product of the artists' fancy."^s The writer believes that it (Fig. 100) is a representative depiction of a white and bearded race known in the Book of Mormon as Nephites.

Another photograph showing a man wearing a stocking cap similar to that on the Olmec figurine is reproduced in this chapter. About fifteen inches in height, it is a representation of a man's head. This Maya relic is housed in the National Museum of Guatemala. Like the Olmec figurine, this one from the Maya culture is Hebraic in appearance. It is suggested that the reader compare these two representations of men wearing stocking caps with an artist's drawing of King Jehu of Israel, who is depicted wearing a similar type of cap. The artist made his drawing from a picture on an official document which shows King Jehu doing homage to King Shalmanezzer of Assyria. The drawing depicts quite accurately the type of cap worn by the people in Jerusalem about the time Lehi and

^sThor Heyerdahl, *American Indians in the Pacific* (Stockholm, Sweden, 1952), p. 292.



—*Photograph: N. G. S. From National Geographic Society—Smithsonian Institution, Arch. Exp. to S. Mexico, 1939-1940.*

Fig. 100: AN ANCIENT AMERICAN STOCKING CAP, MEXICO

Olmec clay head, dating about the time of Christ, from a mound near Tres Zapotes, Vera Cruz, Mexico, is one of the best examples of ceramic art yet found in the New World. Because of its lifelike appearance, it is probably a study of a prominent person of the ancient white race. Compare the stocking cap with the stocking cap of King Jehu of ancient Israel and with the Maya head and stocking cap from Guatemala, Figs. 101 and 102 on next page.

his associates migrated to America. King Jehu dates approximately two hundred years earlier than Lehi's departure from the Holy City.

On our recent trip to the various archaeological sites of Mexico and Central America, we saw several carvings of men wearing stocking caps similar to those shown in the photographs; for example, the depiction of a man carved on the "Tree of Life" stela at Izapa, Mexico, which Dr. M. Wells Jakeman designates as a representation of Father Lehi, is wearing a stocking cap. He also has a long pointed beard. There are also men depicted in the Bonampak murals with stocking caps. On one of the temples at Uxmal, a man is shown wearing a cap. A statue (Fig. 105), housed in the Oaxaca



—Photograph by Author

Fig. 101: MAYA STOCKING CAP

ceramic head in Guatemala National Museum.
ve the stocking cap.



—Drawing by Ralph Hardi

Fig. 102: KING JEHU'S STOCKING CAP

An artist's drawing of King Jehu, depicting the type of cap
by the people in Jerusalem about the time that Lehi and
associates left Jerusalem.

Museum, represents a man wearing a cap; but as the readers will observe, his cap is not pointed as are the others shown in the photographs.

In addition to the bearded men wearing Hebraic-like caps, we photographed and studied a number of representations of bearded men carved on stelae at Copán, Quiriguá, Chichén Itzá, and in the

National Museum of Mexico. There are also a number of bearded men depicted on the stone monuments at Monte Alban and others shown on the temples at that archaeological site. We photographed some interesting figurines and monuments, showing representations of bearded men, at the museums in Mitla, Mexico, Zaculeu near Huehuetenango, Gautemala, and San José, Costa Rica. All of them supply evidence that ancient America was inhabited by a bearded race of white people.

Perhaps the most interesting collection of figurines of bearded men which we saw is owned by Alberto G. Marquez. They are housed in his private museum in Merida, Yucatán, Mexico. He kindly permitted me to photograph all of the artifacts in his collection. I am reproducing eight of the figurines of bearded men in this book for the reader's benefit. These are all early Maya figurines;



—N. G. C. Courtesy of National Geographic Magazine

Fig. 103: LA VENTA BEARDED MAN — "UNCLE SAM"

Detail of the bearded race type from La Venta monument discovered by Matthew W. Stirling in 1939-1940. The La Venta monument is shown on page twenty-three.

and they are quite similar to others that I saw in the Guatemala Museum and other museums of Meso-America. The writer is of the opinion that they are Hebraic-like in appearance and that they supply a vast array of evidence supporting the claims made by the Book of Mormon that the ancestors of the Indians came from Jerusalem.

Perhaps the outstanding portrait carved on an ancient monument which clearly depicts a member of the white race was discovered by Matthew W. Stirling in 1939 and 1940, while on an expedition for the National Geographic Society and the Smithsonian Institution. At La Venta, Tabasco, on the southern coast of the Gulf of Mexico, Stirling discovered a stela fourteen feet high on which was carved a full-bearded figure in low relief which his party members named "Uncle Sam."⁹

In a report of the discovery, Stirling described the carving of the man's profile as a representation of a "remarkably handsome individual with an aristocratic aquiline nose and a curious long-flowing beard."¹⁰ The figure perhaps is a representation of an Olmec or Mulekite priest. Matthew W. Stirling pointed out that both this figure and another on the same stela were wearing shoes with "odd-pointed, up-turned toes."¹¹ The shoes depicted on the stela and the clothing shown on the bearded man are the types worn by the white inhabitants of ancient America and also by their forefathers in Palestine at the time Lehi left Jerusalem for the New World. The bearded man shows a realism and a masterly design which indicate that it is a representation of the white race. Neither the shoes nor the face nor the flowing beard of "Uncle Sam" could be claimed to belong to a "red-skinned Indian."

While at the museum in Copán in 1955, I saw a vase approximately a foot high and nearly as wide, decorated with a bearded man which to José Dávila, Otto Done, and me seemed very Hebraic in appearance. According to Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson, the founding of Copán, an early Maya city of the Classic Period, was as early as 436 A.D. This date is not long after the close of the Book of Mormon period. Perhaps the ancestors of the Mayas were living at Copán even before that date.

⁹Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon* (Oakland, California, 1950), pp. 133-134.

¹⁰Matthew W. Stirling, *National Geographic Magazine* (September 1940), p. 327.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 327.

Numerous other examples of bearded men depicting members of the white race carved on the stelae and buildings at the various archaeological sites throughout Mexico and Central America as well as those collected in museums, could be presented; but it will suffice to end this portion of our discussion with the following quotation:

Beards are drawn in several codices. Thus in *Codex Vaticanus 3773*, another pre-Columbian book from Mexico and in Anahuac handwriting, eleven men with realistic, unmistakable beards are represented. Humboldt (1810, p. 47, 48) reproduces about a dozen other bearded men from the hieroglyphic paintings in the Mexican manuscript preserved in the Imperial Library of Vienna.¹²

A vase, approximately a foot high and nearly as wide, decorated with a bearded man somewhat Hebraic in appearance, is in the museum at Copán, Honduras. According to Dr. J. Eric S. Thompson, the founding of Copán, an early Maya city of the Old Empire, was approximately 436 A.D.



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 104: MAYA BEARDED MAN, COPAN, HONDURAS

SKELETAL REMAINS SUPPLY EVIDENCE OF CAUCASIAN PEOPLES IN ANCIENT AMERICA

Skeletal remains are another form of evidence supplying help in determining the racial type or types of inhabitants of ancient

¹²Heyerdahl, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

America. As a result of the dampness of the climate in Middle America, the bodies of deceased people have in most cases decomposed; however, the skeletal remains which have been studied are said to date after A.D. 400. These found and studied, however, do in part reflect the racial type or types of the earlier people.

The bones of the ancient Mayas in northern Yucatán (the “hooked, beaky noses” helping the work of classifying them) resemble the skeletal remains of the Near East. Dr. Ernest A. Hooton, professor of anthropology at Harvard University, has applied perhaps as much as anyone else the principles of somatology (comparative study of the structure and development of the human body) to the ancient Maya skeletal remains and those of Peru. Regarding the Mayas, he wrote as follows:

It is of considerable interest to ponder the fact that intentional artificial deformation of the skull in a people with *hooked, beaky noses* is associated with the development of high civilizations in two widely separated areas — the Near East and the Western cordillera of the Americas. . . . I am inclined to think that the ancestors of the classical Mayas were not very different from the white hybridized type which we call Armenoid—hook noses from . . . the Iranian Plateau race, round heads from the good old Alpines— and inspired with similar aesthetic ambitions to improve their head form. Eventually they picked up some Mongoloid features—hair, pigmentation, cheek-bones, *et cetera*. These may have been fairly recent accretions, because Mongolization is a late racial phenomenon in the Old World and probably still later in the New. It’s a long, long way to Chichén-Itzá [Yucatán], but the Roman-nosed god and the Long-nosed god both made it.¹³

In regards to Professor Hooton’s conclusions, J. Eric S. Thompson remarked:

If Hooton is right—and there are few to challenge him in his field of physical anthropology—it is an exciting thought that the Maya were, so to speak, second cousins once removed to peoples such as the Sumerians, who were busy erecting pyramids, developing astronomy, and adapting and expanding a high civilization about three thousand years before the Maya. Were those parallels fortuitous? Did the Maya and others of their race carry the seeds of such ideas with them when they crossed to the New World? Or can there be something in the Armenoid blood which inclines them to such interests?¹⁴

Dr. Thompson’s suggestion that the Sumerians may be relatives of the ancestors of the Mayas is exactly in line with the claim made by the Book of Mormon that the Jaredites migrated from the

¹³Ernest A. Hooton, “Skeletons from the *Cenote* of Sacrifice at Chichén Itzá,” the *Maya and Their Neighbors* (1940), pp. 279-280.

¹⁴J. Eric S. Thompson, *The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization* (Norman, Okla., 1955), p. 41.

Tower of Babel, the land of the Sumerians. Thompson also commented as follows on Professor Hooton's conclusions:

. . . Earnest Hooton, of *Up from the Ape* fame, in describing a series of Maya skulls, remarks that they could be duplicated without difficulty in Pueblo crania from New Mexico or Arizona or from burials of coastal Peru. After noting that cranial deformation is found in the Near East and in the western parts of the New World, but is absent among Asiatics describable as Mongoloids, . . .¹⁵

The dryness of the climate in Peru has made it possible for anthropologists to study several hundred well-preserved mummies taken from graves in that country and compare them with other skeletal remains found elsewhere in the Americas.

Bearded man wearing a cap.
Stone statue in Oaxaca Museum.



-Photograph by Author

Fig. 105: ZAPOTEC BEARDED MAN

MONGOLOIDS AND CAUCASIANS IN ANCIENT AMERICA

Perhaps the most important result of recent work done in the field of racial anthropology of the people of the Western Hemisphere is the establishing as a fact that all the "Indians do not stem

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 40.

from one physical type. Diverse types are represented which include elements from both the Mongoloids and the Caucasians."¹⁶

There is no indication in the Book of Mormon of Mongolians coming into contact with Book of Mormon peoples; however, following the close of the Nephite history, many Mongolians came to America and mixed with the Indians. This fact helps to explain why Mongoloid as well as Caucasian elements appear in the archaeological monuments which postdate the Book of Mormon period.

The evidence regarding the physical characteristics of the Mayas who colonized Yucatán has been summarized by Dr. M. Wells Jakeman as follows:

These [documentary] descriptions, at least as to their features, are confirmed and also established for ancient times by the evidence of the sculptured, modeled and painted representations of Itzán priest-rulers at the various ruined temple-cities of the Old Empire and at Chichén Itzá. For according to these representations the Itzás had the orthognathic faces and narrow, high-bridged noses of Caucasians. In fact their noses—their most distinctive feature—are exclusively Caucasian in type: long, relatively narrow and high-bridged, and either convex (that is, "Hebrew" or Armenoid Caucasian), or straight or slightly aquiline (that is Mediterranean and Nordic Caucasian).

Also Caucasian in type are their receding foreheads (extreme cases due to artificial compression), full, curved lips, and somewhat recessive but firm chins.

Moreover, a close study of these representations reveals additional Caucasian-like facial traits, in mixture with some "Mongoloid" more characteristics of the native. In some figures the face is relatively long or narrow, presenting an entirely Caucasian appearance, while in others it is broad, especially at the cheek-bones, giving a distinctly Mongoloid cast. Again, the eyes may be depicted in a horizontal line like those of Caucasians, or they may be shown with a decidedly Mongoloid slant.

Finally, as noted previously, some of the Itzán priest-rulers are depicted with long chin-beards like the ancient Caucasian priest-rulers of Egypt and Babylonia, while others are shown without beards like most Mongoloids.¹⁷

CAUCASIAN-LIKE BEARDED MEN DEPICTED IN PERU

There are also many examples in Peru of representations of Caucasian-like bearded men. Some of them are carved on large stones; however, the majority of them appear on pottery. Especially during the early Chimu period, the ancient Peruvians oftentimes deco-

¹⁶ W. W. Howells, Univ. of Wisconsin, "The Origins of American Indian Race Types," *The Maya and Their Neighbors*, a compilation (D. Appleton-Century, New York, 1940), pp. 3-9.

¹⁷M. Wells Jakeman, *Origin and History of the Mayas* (1950), pp. 181-182.

rated their pottery with portraits of bearded men, as the reader will observe in the photographs. The depictions of bearded men in Peru support the documentary evidences and Indian traditions of a white and bearded race of people who were the founders of the early high culture in that country, a culture which dates back to the time of Christ.



—Courtesy of publishers of Heyerdahl, "American Indians in the Pacific."

Fig. 106: BEARDED MEN ON EARLY CHIMU POTTERY, PERU

realistic early Chimu pottery portraits indicating that a race of white people lived anciently in Peru.

MUMMIES OF WHITE PEOPLE IN PERU

Hundreds of mummies have been dug from burial grounds in Peru and in the adjacent regions. Since the climate is very dry along the west coast of South America, remains of the ancient inhabitants of that region are recovered in a good state of preservation. Some archaeologists claim that many of these remains are of white people who inhabited that land in the distant past. Many of the mummies have hair which in color and texture resembles the hair of the white races. The following is quoted from Thor Heyerdahl:

. . . Next, by turning our attention to the well-preserved Peruvian mummies from the desert tombs at Paracas and other pre-Inca necropoli from later centuries B.C. and earlier centuries A.D., we found that one of the problems they offered modern science was the colour and structure of their hair. Among these best preserved, which had been kept away both from light and from contact with the sand, some had the coarse, straight and black hair of the Mongol and the average modern Peruvian Indian, but there were also a great number with reddish-brown hair (sometimes interspersed with yellow), and with a fine, silky, and sometimes even clearly wavy texture.¹⁸

In his recent book, *American Indians in the Pacific*, Thor

¹⁸Heyerdahl, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

Heyerdahl gives a comprehensive presentation of the results obtained by anthropologists in their studies of several hundred pre-Inca mummies which have been taken from various burial grounds in Peru. He points out that an anthropologist named T. D. Stewart studied many of those skeletal remains and declared that “. . . these mummified individuals were of a noticeably taller stature than formerly known Indians in Peru, and that they differ from known Indians also in facial form. Both cranial deformation and trepanning were observed. . . . They differ from the Peruvian skeletal remains thus far studied, particularly in general size and in narrowness of facial features.”¹⁹

Many of the mummies had coarse, black hair, similar to that of the typical American Indians and Mongolians. The hair showed a wide variation in color, ranging from black to blond, with various shades between. An unusually large number of the mummies had brown hair, and some of them even had red. The hair of some was quite definitely wavy and of a fine texture while that of others appeared to be straight. Anthropologists are of the opinion that the hair of the mummies had not changed color after the death of the ancient people.²⁰ In the words of Heyerdahl:

Apart from colour and degree of waviness of hair, its fineness and also the shape of its cross section are, as is well known, the two additional characteristics used for classifying hair types. Mongoloid hair, like that of the common American Indian, is wide in cross section *area* and circular in cross section *form*. The degree of ovalness in cross section form seems closely associated with the degree of waviness or curliness of the hair itself.²¹

Although the cross section form of the hair on different mummies showed a wide variation, the hair itself was much finer than the hair generally found on Indians; in fact, the hair of the mummies studied was thirty per cent finer than the hair of the ordinary Indian.

It is claimed by those who made the study that the hair of the Peruvian mummies was similar in texture, fineness, and color variations to that of the Caucasian races.

As a result of the study of the hair of these Peruvian mummies, some anthropologists have suggested that those skeletal remains were of a people that should not be classified as Indians. They per-

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 321.

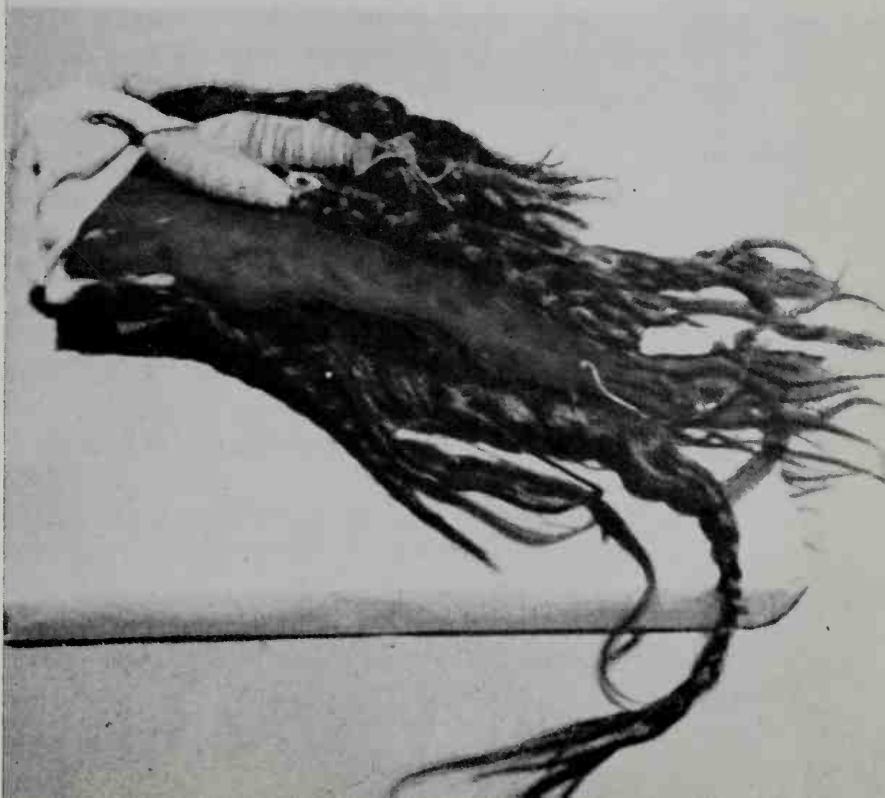
²⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 322-324.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 322.

specimen of Caucasian-like hair from a pre-Inca head from Makatapu, near Lima, Peru. Observe the fine texture, waviness, and light color of the hair.



specimens of human hair from mummies of people of the pre-Inca high culture at Nazca, in the south Peru. The hair color of these specimens ranges from shades of black, red, brown, and blond. The red samples appear in this photo to be black.



haps represent a white race which lived in Peru about the time of the beginning of the Christian era, and as time passed they became absorbed into the dark-skinned Indian population. Thor Heyerdahl reached the following conclusion:

. . . On the other hand, while drawing more exaggerated conclusions, it can safely be said that nothing discovered in the Paracas caves argues against the hypothesis that a foreign or Caucasian-like [white] race entered into the culture complex of pre-Inca Peru, and that this race was comparatively tall in stature, with a narrow face, and hair in varying shades of brown, fine in texture, and occasionally wavy. . . . They [the mummies] confirm what was indicated by the Inca memories and the pre-Inca pottery heads: that a non-Mongoloid and Caucasian-like element seems to have been present in the early local era.²²

An anthropologist, M. Trotter, who studied the Peruvian mummies, states that “. . . the cross section area of the hair is closely correlated with its weight, and with that hair of the Arab of Central Iraq, which was tested for change in weight before and after dehydration.”²³ The fact that the anthropologists have classified the hair with that of the Arabs is important, since the Arabs were of the same race originally as the Hebrews, and the Book of Mormon claims that the Nephites and Lamanites were descendants of the Hebrews.

CONCLUSIONS

The numerous carvings of bearded men on monuments found at various places in Meso-America and the Andean region, the large number of figurines and statues which depict bearded men Hebrew-like in appearance, the study made of mummies indicating a race of people taller than the Indians and Caucasian-like in appearance, and the wide variation both in texture and color of hair found on mummies, all unite in supporting the claims made by the Book of Mormon that ancient America was settled by a bearded white people. The writer identifies this white race, which preserved itself as a strong nation until about A.D. 400, as the Nephites whose ancestors came from Jerusalem. Thus archaeology and anthropology have brought forth numerous evidences to sustain the claims made by the Book of Mormon.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 324-325.

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 323.

CHAPTER 11

WHITE INDIANS IN MESO-AMERICA

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

In the preceding three chapters a considerable amount of evidence was presented which showed that white and dark peoples lived in ancient America from the time of the close of the Book of Mormon until the discovery of this land. Prophecies made by the Nephite leaders were quoted, showing that a part of the Nephites would not be destroyed at the time of the destruction of their nation; "but whosoever remaineth [of the Nephites] and is not destroyed in that great and dreadful day, shall be numbered among the Lamanites."¹ Thus the writer concluded "that the ancient Nephites are at least partially accountable for the white peoples who inhabited America between the dates of 421 A.D. and its discovery in 1492 A.D."²

SURVIVAL OF WHITE INDIANS FOLLOWING AMERICA'S DISCOVERY

Certain questions now arise: "Did any of these white peoples—descendants of the ancient Nephites—live until after the discovery of America? If so, are there available reports made by missionaries, explorers, and others who were among the first to have personal contact with white Indians?" The answer is, "Yes!" Since the discovery of America, numerous reports have come from the regions of the upper Amazon of South America, from Colombia, and Venezuela, from Darien, Guatemala, and Mexico, and even from the northwestern Pacific Coast of the United States, from New Mexico and Arizona, as well as from the Mississippi Valley, to the effect that numerous white Indians were observed by the early Europeans and others who first visited those Indian tribes. A part of that authentic evidence is presented in the following three chapters. Regarding these white Indians, Paul Herrmann, a German scholar, has recently written:

. . . In many parts of the New World there are white Indians, whose European discoverers time and again declared: "These are not Indians!" The

¹Alma 45:14.

²Milton R. Hunter, "White and Dark Peoples of Ancient America," *The Improvement Era* (Salt Lake City, July, 1955), p. 496.

natives of America are distinguished by a great variation in the colour of their skins. Alongside peoples with markedly red skins there are others with pale yellow or bronze skins, and the Dakota, Menomini and Zuni look almost white, although their physiognomy is entirely Indian. Besides these "almost white," but nonetheless Indian tribes there are peoples of completely European appearance, with white skins, fair hair, blue eyes, and altogether un-Indian features. The white Indians of Venezuela, who still exist, are men-



Fig. 108: WHITE QUICHÉ MAYA WOMEN

—Photographs by Author

White Quiché women laundering their clothing. The women live in the highlands of Guatemala near Quezaltenango.

tioned in the chronicles of the Spanish conquerors, and the Boroanos Indians on the Rio Imperial in Chile were known to the *conquistadores* as "white Indians."

In North America too there is a whole series of white Indian tribes. . . .³

Dr. P. De Roo, in his book *History of America before Columbus*, summarizes the vast amount of evidence of the wide distribution of tribes of white Indians throughout the Americas at the time of the coming of the Europeans. To quote:

The Uskihs, the Puruays, the Parias, the Chons, etc., were as white as the Spaniards, and fifty such tribes were found in South America. Along the whole of the northwest coast Meares, Marchand, La Perouse, Dixon, and Maurelle have observed populations which, judging from some of their

³Paul Hermann, *Conquest by Man* (New York, 1954), p. 175.

descriptions, we would take to be of pure white ancestry. On the upper Missouri the Kiawas, Kaskaias, and the Lee Panis possess, we are assured, the attributes of the purest white races, including their fair hair. The Mandans have from our present point of view, always attracted attention. . . . Ferdinand Columbus, in his relation of his father's voyages, compares the inhabitants of Guanahani to the Canary Islanders, and describes the inhabitants of San Domingo as still more beautiful and fair. In Peru the Charazanis also resemble the Canary Islanders, and differ from all the surrounding tribes. . . .

Women as fair as English milkmaids were found in Central America. Along the northwest coast dwell numerous tribes which, according to accounts, must be widely distinguished from the Indians of the interior. The Tlinket or Koloshian family, consisting of several tribes, are represented as lighter-colored than any other North American aborigines. They have, indeed, been described as having as fair a complexion, when their skins are washed, as some inhabitants of Europe; and this feature accompanied sometimes with auburn hair, has been considered as indicating an origin different from that of the copper-colored tribes.⁴

A. Hyatt Verrill made the following comment regarding white Indians:

Although the majority of North American Indians have brown eyes and coarse, straight black hair, there are tribes whose eyes are hazel, grey, or even blue, and whose hair is brown rather than black, and is soft and fine. Indeed, if we read over all the accounts of the old discoverers and explorers we will find that, even in those days, the men who had actually travelled among the Indians had accurately described these variations. Dampire, the pirate naturalist, Ringrose, Esquemeling, and many others called particular attention to the light skins and brown hair of many tribes and, in several places in their journals, they state that the women are "as fair as any woman of Spain," or that their hair "is exceedingly long and soft and of pleasing brown shade." This proves that the light skins, brown hair, and grey eyes of some Indian tribes are not due to any admixture of Caucasian blood.⁵

It is a significant fact of great importance that the first Europeans to visit Indian tribes in the Americas made their reports of white Indians before there were opportunities for the intermarriage of the natives with the European discoverers and colonizers of the New World. Thus, it is obvious that the various groups of white Indians came from some original white ancestry. Although various theories have been presented by different writers—some claiming Irish, others Welsh, others Viking, and others Hebrew ancestry for the American Indians—a vast amount of evidence has accumulated which indicates that the progenitors of the white

⁴P. De Roo, *History of America before Columbus* (Philadelphia, 1900), pp. 306-307.

⁵A. Hyatt Verrill, *The American Indian—North, South and Central America* (New York, 1927), p. 45.

Indians were principally the Nephites of Book of Mormon days, who were of Hebraic or Israelitic origin.

WHITE INDIANS IN SONORA, MEXICO

I received my first definite evidence regarding the white Indians of Mexico about twenty-five years ago while taking a class under Dr. Herbert E. Bolton, chairman of the history department at the University of California. In one of his lectures, Dr. Bolton stated that Father Eusebio Francisco Kino (Kee'-no), a Catholic priest who spent the major portion of his life doing missionary work among the Indians, wrote in his journal that he had discovered in the mountain region of Sonora, Mexico, an entire village of white Indians. The Catholic *padre* described them as being superior in appearance and culture to their darker-skinned neighbors—a characteristic which prevailed throughout most of Book of Mormon

Fig. 109: WHITE LACANDON WOMAN WITH RED HAIR

A Lacandón woman of the El Cedro clan near Bonampak, Mexico. Her skin is as white as the skin of any of our women.

—Photograph by Author



times in connection with the Nephites' superiority over the Lamanites. Father Kino also stated that those white Indians did not intermarry with the bronze-colored ones, and that the latter rendered the white Indians definite respect and protection.

WHITE INDIANS DESCENDANTS OF NEPHITES

Upon returning to Utah, I presented the foregoing information to students at the Institute of Religion who were attending the Utah State Agricultural College. Naturally they inquired regarding the origin of those white Indians. I conjectured, "They were descendants of draft evaders of the last great war between the Nephites and Lamanites." And then I explained that the evidence indicated that they were descendants of the Nephites, because many of those people joined with the Lamanites and thereby avoided death at the time of the last destructive battles which ended the Nephite nation. Mormon gives us this information in a letter to his son, Moroni, written shortly before the last great battle. To quote:

. . . we know that many of our brethren have dissented over unto the Lamanites, and many more will also dissent over unto them; . . .⁶

Sometime between 400 and 421 A.D.—possibly toward the latter date and probably more than twenty years following Mormon's death—Moroni wrote:

. . . I make not myself known to the Lamanites lest they should destroy me.

. . . because of their hatred they put to death every Nephite that will not deny the Christ.

And I, Moroni, will not deny the Christ; wherefore, I wander whithersoever I can for the safety of mine own life.⁷

The fact that many Nephites would survive the last great war,⁸ be numbered with the Lamanites,⁹ and be preserved in the land forever,¹⁰ is completely in accord with the promises of the Lord through his holy prophets to the Nephites.

⁶Moroni 9:24.

⁷*Ibid.*, 1:1-3.

⁸1 Nephi 13:30-31; 2 Nephi 3:1-3.

⁹Alma 45:14.

¹⁰2 Nephi 9:53.

CORTES' LIGHT-SKINNED FRIEND, DONA MARINA

Paul Herrmann, a German scholar, recently described the famous Doña Marina, who for many years was Hernando Cortes' ". . . truest comrade and the only trustworthy companion of his life,"¹¹ as ". . . a light-skinned princess exiled by Moctezuma (Mock-ta-su'-ma), a member of the imperial house."¹²

WHITE INDIANS NEAR VERA CRUZ, MEXICO

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

¹¹Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 167.

Fig. 110: CHAN KIM, LACANDON INDIAN BOY

The skin of this Lacandón Indian boy is nearly white. He is a member of the El Cedro clan near Bonampak.

—Courtesy of Robert Bruce

—Photograph by Barbara Sykes



period noted in their journals that they, too, had visited white Indians in Central and North America; for example, the eminent *Padre* Bernardino de Sahagun (Sä-hä-goon'), 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; . . .¹³

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 delightsome,”¹⁴ being a superior, intelligent, industrious, moral, and God-fearing people; while their darker-skinned brethren—the Lamanites—“were . . . an idle people, full of mischief and subtlety,”¹⁵ wild and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people, “full of idolatry and filthiness,”¹⁶ delighting in wars and bloodshed, and during much of their history of Book of Mormon days, having a burning hatred against the Nephites.¹⁸

WHITE MAYA INDIANS IN BRITISH HONDURAS

During the early part of this century, an important British archaeologist, Thomas Gann, was on a field trip through the jungles

¹³Sahagun, *Historia de las Cosas de Nueva Espana, Libro Noveno, Capitula 29, Sec. 7*, cited in Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon* (Oakland, Calif., 1950), p. 247.

¹⁴2 Nephi 5:21.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 5:9-20.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 5:24.

¹⁷Enos 1:20.

¹⁸Jacob 7:24.



-Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 111: LIGHT-COLORED LACANDON WOMEN

Left to right: Maria, second wife of Carranza, has white skin, as white as any of the women of our race. Carmita, first wife of Carranza, and Juan's wife both have practically white skin.

of Honduras and Guatemala, studying the Maya Indians. In his book, *Maya Cities*, he reports that there were white Indians among the Mayas of British Honduras even as late as that time. To quote:

Ojeda, our guide, when fighting in the Mexican army against the Santa Cruz [of British Honduras], had been taken prisoner by them, and had some curious adventures to relate, which were of especial interest to me, as we hoped to penetrate the Santa Cruz country during the dry season of 1927. The Indians, he said, allowed him the freedom of their sacred city, and what astonished him most was to see a number of fair-haired men and women



—Photograph by Otto Done

Fig. 112: WHITE YUCATECS AT CHICHEN ITZA

Observe the beautiful native costume worn by the woman. They said they were Mayas or Yucatecs; however, I failed to inquire whether or not they were fullblood Indians.

amongst them, with blue eyes and light complexions, who seemed to lead the same life and be in no way distinguished from the other Maya. . . .²³

LIGHT-COMPLEXIONED ITZA MAYAS

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 (Tah-yah-sal'), on an island

²³Thomas Gann, *Maya Cities* (New York, 1928), p. 58.

in Lake Petén (Pay-tén'), Guatemala. He described the skin color of those people as follows:

These Ytzas are well-featured and, like mestizos, nearly all of a light complexion and of very perfect stature, and of natural gifts.²⁰

WHITE YAQUI INDIANS

The Yaqui (Yah'key) Indians live in Old Mexico near the border of the United States. They are an intelligent, hard-working, outstanding tribe of Indians. They earn their own livelihood, not depending upon the government nor any other agency for help. George G. Sloan of Mesa, Arizona, has spent many years associating with and working among the Yaqui Indians. He is well-acquainted with practically every one of them. He informed me that as a group they are not as dark as many tribes of Indians. Occasionally one with red hair is born among them. The following is quoted from a letter from George G. Sloan, written June 16, 1956:

Many of these people [Yaqui Indians] are light colored and have brown eyes and a few even have blue eyes. They are highly intelligent and are striving to become an enlightened people.

Their morality is the highest that I have ever seen. There are three things they will banish their own people for, and they are to murder wilfully, to steal, or to commit adultery.²¹

LIGHT-COLORED QUICHE MAYAS

My first experience in mingling with large numbers of light-colored Indians — some of them nearly white — whose progenitors had intermarried very little with European settlers, was on our recent trip to Mexico and Central America. Approximately sixty-five percent of the inhabitants of Guatemala are fullblood Indians, principally Mayas. As a result of studying the problem of the origin of the Indians, I had reached the conclusion before going to Guatemala that the Quiché Mayas were as nearly direct descendants of the Nephite-Lamanite peoples as any other Indians. Furthermore, the Quichés' writings maintain that “. . . they came from where the sun rises [from the other side of the sea],²² descendants

²⁰Andres de Avendano y Loyola, *Relacion de las dos Entradas que hize a Petén 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.

²¹Letter from George G. Sloan to Milton R. Hunter, June 16, 1956.

²²*The Annals of the Cakchiquels* (Eng. tr. by Delia Goetz, Norman, Oklahoma, 1953), p. 43.

of Israel, of the same language and the same customs . . . they were sons of Abraham and Jacob.²³

Our party of twenty people spent the first week end while in Guatemala at Chichicastenango, the headquarters of the Quiché-Maya Indians. Fortunately, these peoples were having an elaborate religious celebration in commemoration of St. Tomás—their patron saint. There were perhaps four to five thousand Indians participating.

²³*The Title of the Lords of Totonicapán* (Eng. tr. by Delia Goetz, Norman, Oklahoma, 1953), p. 170.



—Photograph by Author

Fig. 113: WHITE QUICHE YOUNG MAN

White-blooded Quiché Maya Indians with white skin. They are dressed in their colorful native costumes. They are in Chichicastenango, Guatemala.



Fig. 114: WHITE QUICHE YOUNG WOMAN



—Photograph by Author

Fig. 115: WHITE AND DARK-COLORED QUICHE WOMEN

These Quiché Maya Indian women were washing their clothing in a stream at Tonicapán, Guatemala. This photograph illustrates the typical variation in skin color, ranging from white to dark, of fullblood Quiché Indians throughout all of Guatemala.

We were informed by our guide while on our way to Chichicastenango that the Quiché Mayas were practically white. After our arrival, I was delighted to observe that the skin color of hundreds of them was much lighter in shade than that of the average Indian in our section of the country—namely, the Navajos, the Utes, the Piutes, and the Apaches. Furthermore, all of our party members were impressed with what appeared to us to be resemblances of the Quiché Mayas to the Jewish people. In fact, it would not have been difficult for one to make himself imagine while at that religious festival in Chichicastenango that he was walking the streets of Jerusalem some 2,000 years ago. It is not surprising that such should be the case, since the ancestors of these people came from Jerusalem, a part of them being of the tribe of Ephraim, others of Manasseh, and the remainder of Judah.

In February, 1956, the following year after visiting Chichicastenango with the touring party, I had the privilege of visiting practically every town and city in Guatemala, including Chichicastenango, while touring the Central American Mission with President and Sister Edgar Wagner. We held meeting after meeting with the Indians. This supplied an excellent opportunity for me to observe carefully the skin-color of thousands of the Quiché Mayas. Some of them were very dark in color, while others had light-colored skin. I saw a number of them that were actually white.

The photographs of the Quiché Mayas printed herein illustrate the wide range of skin-color of these people, showing that some of them are white Indians.

WHITE LACANDON MAYA INDIANS

Approximately one month after I first visited Chichicastenango, I had a thrill which I shall never forget. As was pointed out in an earlier chapter, José Dávila, Otto Done, and I made a journey into the jungles of southern Mexico to Bonampak. While on the jungle trail, we were met by three Lacandón Indians. My first great surprise was to observe that one of them was positively white and the other two nearly so; and then I recalled that when our guide in Guatemala had informed us that the Quiché Maya Indians were practically white, he had also remarked that there was a primitive, wild, tribe of Indians—the Lacandóns—living in the jungles of southern Mexico, who were absolutely white.

As we continued onward through the jungles, we met several more Lacandóns. Most of them had black hair, but some of them were positively white-skinned while others had a slight amount of dark color in their skins.

Since our guides to Bonampak were the Lacandóns, we were with those Indians for nearly three days. This afforded us considerable opportunity to observe and study them. As mentioned earlier, one of the Indian women had red hair; and her skin was just as white as that of any of our women. She had a small baby. It also was very white with dark blue eyes and brown hair. One of the Indian men, José Pepé, the religious leader of the El Cedro clan, also had red hair and white skin. (See photograph.) We associated with approximately twenty-five Lacandóns. Their skin color ranged



Courtesy of Robert Bruce

Fig. 116: WHITE LACANDON GIRLS WITH RED AND BLOND HAIR

The blond Indian girl has blue eyes.



—Photographs by Robert Bruce

Fig. 117: WHITE LACANDON WOMAN AND BABY
Observe that the Lacandón woman has black hair and skin while her baby has very white skin and brown hair.

from pure white to slightly dusky shades. There were no really dark-skinned ones among them. There were no albinos among the Lacandón Indians. The ones who had white skin were of a natural whiteness just as is our skin color.

In addition to the baby already mentioned, we saw two babies at José Pepé's *casa* and perhaps two more at Obregon's home. The skin color of all the babies was white. Most of them had brown hair and hazel eyes; however, it is claimed that occasionally one is born with blue eyes. It seems that the skin color becomes a little darker on some of them as they grow older; however, from what we observed, many of the women seemed to remain very white in color throughout life. The color of the men in general appeared to be slightly darker than that of the women, although it should be recalled that José Pepé was as white as the women.



—Courtesy of Robert Bruce

—Photograph by Barbara Sykes

Fig. 118: WHITE LACANDON WOMAN AND DAUGHTER

Maria, second wife of Kayum, mixes *posole* in a large clay pot. When fermented it makes a mildly intoxicating drink which the Lacandóns call *phur*. Corn, bananas, and gourds constitute important items in the Lacandóns' diet. Native tobacco leaves are hanging from a pole at the right of the photograph. The *bolsa* containing corn hanging from a pole at the left is woven of bark which the Indians call *tsup-tok*. It is one of the strongest natural fibers known.

Robert Bruce, the young man from Oklahoma who was lost in the jungles of Chiapas and after nine days of wandering was rescued by the Lacandón Indians, spent several months with them. He became well acquainted with practically all these primitive, jungle dwellers. He graciously supplied me with a number of photographs of Lacandón Indians; some were pictures of the same people that I visited and others of Indians that I did not see while visiting Bonampak. One was the photograph of a white Lacandón Indian with red hair and with her one with blond hair and blue eyes. He also photographed another Lacandón woman with blond hair and blue eyes. These photos are printed herein.

A question of vital importance is, "Who are these Lacandón Indians?" Charles Morrow Wilson, who in 1947 visited the same



—Courtesy of Robert Bruce

—Photograph by Robert Bruce

Fig. 119: WHITE BLOND LACANDÓN GIRL

The skin of this blond Lacandón girl is very white while her mother's skin is darker in color.

group of Lacandóns that we visited, answers this question as follows:

But the people who live in the lost valley are by far the most interesting and significant of all its colorful inhabitants. These are the little-known Lacandón Indians, direct and least changed descendants of the great Mayas of old. These Indians continued to live and worship very much as their illustrious Maya forefathers did. . . .²⁴

In the matter of blood, the Lacandóns are unquestionably the purest descendants of the builders of the great ruins of Yucatán and Petén. Their forefathers, stubbornly resisting every attempt to bring them under Spanish rule, fled to the most inaccessible part of their former realm, and for four centuries they have kept themselves aloof from every outside contact. . . .

Gradual encroachment by *chicleros* and mahogany cutters has driven the Lacandóns farther and farther back from the main rivers. Always shy and

²⁴Charles Morrow Wilson, "Rediscovering Lost Temples of the Mayas," *Travel* (Baltimore, November 1948), p. 24.

fiercely adverse to mixing with outsiders, some of the more remote groups occupy the least-known frontiers of present-day Mexico.²⁵

One may ask: "Is it not possible that the members of the Lacandón tribe who are positively white are children of white men who had intermarried with the women of this primitive tribe?" Wilson gives us the answer:

. . . This group, the Cedro clan, had rarely before seen a white man. Only four years ago, they had for the first time seen a *chiclero*, or wild chicle harvester—an Indian-Spanish cross. They had apparently never heard of Mexico, taxes, or voting; or autos, airplanes, or any other wheeled vehicle.²⁶

The white Lacandóns that we saw—the Cedro clan—were too old to be offspring of whites, since—according to available evidence they were first visited by white men probably less than fifteen years ago, and so the history of the Lacandóns rules out that possibility. The other possible answer, therefore, is that the white color must have come as an inheritance from their ancient ancestors—through the illustrious Mayas of the Old Empire and on back to their predecessors, the Nephites.

²⁵Wilson, "Backwards a Dozen Centuries," *Natural History* (New York, October 1947), p. 371.

²⁶Wilson, *Travel*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

CHAPTER 12

WHITE INDIANS IN DARIEN AND SOUTH AMERICA

WHITE INDIANS OF DARIEN

One of the largest groups of white Indians found in either of the Americas was that which lived in Darien. Richard Oglesby Marsh estimated that of the Indian population of 40,000, approximately 2,000 or five percent were white in color.¹ The country of Darien is located on the southern end of the Isthmus of Panama directly north of where the isthmus joins South America.

In his book, *White Indians of Darien*, Marsh described in an interesting manner his observations and study of the inhabitants of that country—known as the San Blas Indians or, as they called themselves, the “Tule (Too'-lay) People.” He explained that the Spaniards had appeared early on the San Blas coast in their search for gold, but soon thereafter the Indians drove them out with great slaughter. From that day until the time Marsh visited them in 1934, the Tule people had maintained their independence. He wrote:

When the Tules finally got rid of the Spaniards, they set about taking steps which would preserve them in the future. Very wisely they did not refuse to trade with their late enemies, but they would never allow a trader to spend the night in their territory nor go back into the interior. This law has been enforced rigidly upon everyone with the exception of myself, and my dealings with the San Blas Indians were wholly unusual. As a result no one explores interior Darien from the Caribbean. It just isn't done.²

The enforcement of this law prevented the intermarriage of Spaniards and Indians; and so the white Indians of Darien are not the offspring of post-Columbian Europeans.

While on a scientific expedition to Darien, Marsh and a Negro companion were near one of the Indian villages one day. They happened to be looking at a small clearing which extended a few yards into the encompassing jungle when

¹Richard Oglesby Marsh, *White Indians of Darien* (New York, 1934), p. 213.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

Across the narrow clearing were walking three young girls, perhaps fourteen to sixteen years old. They wore nothing but small loin-cloths and their almost bare bodies were as white as any Scandinavian's. Their long hair, falling loosely over their shoulders, was bright gold! Quickly and gracefully they crossed the open space and disappeared into the jungles.³

His Negro companion explained:

"They come from a tribe which lives in the mountains up the Chucunaque. . . . Before this they haven't come so far down the valley. But a little time ago they built a house above our village, and families of them come down to trade with us. Some are white. Some are dark like other Indians."⁴



—Photographs courtesy Mrs. Dewey Farnsworth

Fig. 120: WHITE AND DARK INDIAN CHILDREN OF DARIEN

Fig. 121: WHITE DARIEN INDIAN WOMAN

serve on the first photograph the white skins of the two San Blas Indian boys in contrast with the dark-skinned man and children in the background. On the other photo, the one Indian woman is blond and very white while the others range in darker shades.

Marsh followed the trail which the girls had taken into the jungles and overtook them at their home. Describing the incident, he wrote:

. . . I examined their skin closely to make sure it was not colored artificially. It was not. I looked at their golden hair, which was of much finer texture than the coarse hair of other Indians. Their eyes were hazel or bluish-brown.

White Indians! I remember the tales of such people—tales from all over Latin America. And also I remember the universal derision with which such tales were received. But these were certainly Indians; and they were most certainly white. They were not albinos in the commonly accepted meaning

³*Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁴*Idem.*

of the term—for albinos have white hair, wholly colorless skin, pink eyes, and blue gums. My three little girls looked like healthy Norwegians, not biological monstrosities. Neither were they the half-breed offspring of some American gold prospector. I'd seen plenty of these, and they were invariably dark.⁵

Since Marsh was acquainted with the fact that Leif Ericson and other Vikings had visited America approximately 1000 A.D., naturally he thought that the white Indians of Darien might be descendants of the Scandinavians. Those who had light-colored or golden hair interested him most because they best sustained his Nordic theory. However, it is evident that he was not acquainted with the fact that Israelites migrated from Jerusalem to America approximately 600 B.C.; and for 1000 years a great nation of white people flourished here, finally to be destroyed; and that thereafter the white survivors mingled with their darker-skinned, former enemies.

It has been pointed out that Jesus, who came from a common ancestry with these peoples, had hair somewhat red or “of a colour of a chestnut full ripe.” White Indians having red hair have been found in many native tribes;⁶ and so it could be possible that the white girls with “golden hair,” described by Marsh, could also be of Israelitic origin. On the other hand, it may be that some of the Vikings went as far south as Darien and augmented the white blood found among those Indians.

Marsh reported his experience to General Babbitt, commandant at Quarry Heights and ranking American army officer in the Panama Canal Zone. The general replied that recently he had sent a Lieutenant Arnold on a plane trip. Arnold flew across the interior of Darien to Colombia, the clouds forcing him to fly very low. The general remarked: “When he returned, he reported orally to me that he had passed over a village in the interior which was inhabited by white-skinned people living like Indians.”⁷

Later Marsh and his associates met four Americans, employees of the Sinclair Oil Company, who reported that they had seen “. . . numerous white Indians—‘White as any white man,’ some on the

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁶Hubert Howe Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States* (New York, 1875), vol. 1, p. 157; A. C. Haddon, *The Races of Man and the Distribution* (New York, 1924), pp. 33, 128; Thor Heyerdahl, *American Indians of the Pacific* (New York, 1953), p. 85.

⁷Marsh, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.

Lower Chucunaque and some on the Rio Paca, a tributary of the Upper Tuyra.”⁸

After experiencing the thrill of actually seeing the white Indians and now receiving definite information that numerous others lived in the interior of Darien, Marsh determined to travel throughout Darien and study as many of the white Indians as possible and if feasible take some of them to the United States for scientists to study. He successfully won the friendship of an important Indian chief who promised that he would arrange for Marsh to see as many white Indians as he desired. Soon thereafter, at an Indian town named Portogandi, Marsh reports that the following incident occurred:

And here we saw . . . white Indians—one of whom, a boy of fourteen, . . . I looked at him with amazement. Here was my white Indian at last . . . the scientists would have a grand time explaining him. At least they couldn't fall back on the theory that white Indians existed only in the imagination of wild-eyed explorers. We had not only seen them, but were bringing them back to America to be studied at leisure.⁹

The Indian chief then brought out a little naked white boy about eight years of age. Marsh went to the home of this white Indian boy and concerning the experience wrote:

. . . When I entered I got a surprise. The mother and father of the boy were not white. They were ordinary Indians without anything unusual about them except that the father was rather tall. They had three other children. The second boy was also white, but the two girls were olive-brown like their parents.

I didn't know what to make of it, but I had no time to think, for I had other surprises in store for me. Chief Nelle's message had gone out to the surrounding country, and more white Indians were coming into town from the mountains, the jungle rivers, and the smaller islands along the coast. Some were pure white, others were midway between white and brown. We took pictures of them and questioned them without reserve. . . .¹⁰

Marsh and his group sailed on the river nearly to the next Indian village, Alligandi. The chief sent for them. Marsh narrates the following events:

. . . As we dropped anchor, half a dozen canoes with white Indians in them came out to meet us. Among the crowd on shore were many more, women and girls as well as men and boys. . . .

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp.203-204.

. . . we saw many more white Indians in the street—whole families of them. The word had passed up the coast, and they were flocking in from the mainland. There were even more than in Portugandi. I was amazed and bewildered. . . .¹¹

Eventually Marsh brought some of the white Indians of Darien to Washington, D. C., and kept them in the United States and Canada for several months to be studied by the scientists. He states:

However, in spite of their hesitancy to pronounce a final word on the "scientific composition" of the white Indians, the scientists' committee did formally announce, through Dr. Alex Hrdlicka, that the Tule people apparently were a practically pure-blooded remnant of the ancient first dynasty Mayas and also related anthropologically to the early coastal cultures of Peru, the Yuncas and the Chimu. This alone was of great scientific importance, for the original first-dynasty Mayas and the pre-Inca coastal Peruvians are now vanished races, overwhelmed and amalgamated by later conquering peoples.¹²

After the scientists had studied the white Indians brought to Washington, D. C., Marsh took them back to Darien.

The fact that the scientists pronounced the white Indians of Darien to be "a practically pure-blooded remnant of the ancient first dynasty Mayas" and early Peruvians is also very important to students of the Book of Mormon, because the Quiché Mayas of Guatemala have left three written documents (books) which claim that their ancestors were Israelites.¹³ Numerous claims are made in these Maya books and in their traditions which closely parallel Book of Mormon teachings; and so those who accept the Nephite record as a divine book can unhesitatingly identify the Mayas as being basically descendants of the Nephite-Lamanite peoples.

WHITE INDIANS IN VENEZUELA

There is an abundance of evidence, as Paul Herrmann, a German scholar, recently wrote, to demonstrate the fact that ". . . in many parts of the New World there are white Indians."¹⁴ I talked to a man in Montana over a year ago who for many years had been an employee of the Shell Oil Company in Venezuela. He reported that many times in the jungles of Venezuela he had seen white

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 206-209.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 221.

¹³*Popol Vuh* (English version by Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley, Norman, Oklahoma, 1950); *The Annals of the Cakchiquels, and Title of the Lords of Totonicapán* (English version by Delia Goetz, Norman, Oklahoma, 1953).

¹⁴Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 175.



—Courtesy of Indian Agency of Venezuela Government

Fig. 122: BLACK GUAIKA INDIAN MOTHERS AND BABIES

The skin color of Guaiika Indians ranges from black as Negroes to white as Europeans.

Indians, as white as any of us. Desiring to investigate further, I wrote to the Shell Oil Company in Venezuela, South America, and asked for information regarding white Indians in that country. I received a reply from the company written by Sr. Rafael Morello. He sent me the addresses of several people from whom I could get definite information regarding the white Indians of Venezuela. In the course of his letter, Sr. Morello remarked:

Many people here, however, have heard of white Indians, especially Motilones (Mot-eel-on'-es), and rumours are that they not only have a white skin but even blond hair and blue eyes.¹³

From an official publication of the Venezuela government, a 1953 report from the "Venezuelan Indians Organ of the Commission for Indians," Brother W. Ernest Young translated from Spanish the following:

The skin of the Guaikas (Guy-kahs) is more clear [white] than that of the other Indians and of the majority of the *oriollos* (mixed blood) that inhabit the Federal Territory of the Amazons.

¹³Letter from Cia. Shell de Venezuela, by Rafael Morello, to Milton R. Hunter, July 20, 1955.



—Courtesy of Indian Agency of Venezuela Government

Fig. 123: WHITE GUAIKA INDIAN WOMAN WITH BROWN HAIR

Fig. 124: WHITE GUAIKA INDIAN MOTHER AND BABY

The hair of the majority of the individuals is fine, but some have it moderately rough or shaggy. The color of the hair is black or chestnut color and some few have hair with a light mixture of red. Some of the children have a very light-colored hair, that seems to turn more dark as they grow up. Few of the oldest persons have gray hair.

The majority of the men have a very thin beard or none absolutely. Their arms, legs and breast are generally free from hair.

The eyes of the majority of them are dark-gray and some are dark-eyed. Some of the children have blue eyes.¹⁶

Photographs of fullblood Indians in that official government publication show some natives who are practically black, others of a bronze-colored skin, and others positively white. These Guaika Indians go nearly naked. With the permission of the Venezuela Government, we are reproducing the photos of four white Indians and, for the purpose of contrast, two very dark Guaika mothers with their babies.

The second photo is of a young Indian woman with her goods on her back. She seems to be on her way to the market or is perhaps returning to her jungle home. Observe her very white skin and light brown hair. Also, a photo is shown of a white Indian mother with her baby.

¹⁶Republic of Venezuela—Ministry of Justice Bulletin of the Venezuelan Indians Organ of the Commission for Indians (Caracas, June to December, 1953), p. 440.



—Courtesy of Indian Agency of Venezuela Government

Fig. 125: MARIA DE LOS ANGELOS MONTEIEL

An educated, highly intelligent white Guaika Indian woman, Maracaibo, Venezuela.

The fourth photograph is of a white Indian woman who is said to be a very superior person. The peculiar black lines on her face are designs which the natives of her tribe wear on certain festive occasions.

This very attractive Indian woman has abandoned the jungles and the Indians' primitive way of living and affiliated herself with the white people and their way of life. She has received a very up-to-date education and, according to a biographical sketch regarding her, is a very intelligent and outstanding woman. Her name is Maria de los Angeles Montiel. She lives in the city of Maracaibo, Venezuela, where she works in the fiscal magistrate's office as a secretary and especially as an interpreter of the Indian language. Since she is very proficient in the use of her native tongue, as well as of Castilian Spanish, she has a deep understanding of the Indians and helps them to transact their business. She is of special assistance to her people in preparing their legal papers. The following is quoted from the biographical sketch of this white Indian woman:

But the true merits of this intelligent and dynamic . . . [Indian woman are] the social work that in silence she carries out in favor of the Indians who are disinherited or afflicted by different calamities. . . . In Maria de los Angeles they find a generous heart and valiant at all times, one who listens to them, understands and helps them materially when it is necessary, or she rushes courageously to defend them against abuse or injustice.¹⁷

She has many accomplishments. She has learned Italian, received a diploma of dressmaking as an efficient seamstress, holds the title of chauffeur and also that of nurse. Her accomplishments are indicative of what perhaps could be attained by many Indians if they had the opportunities afforded by modern education.

WHITE INDIANS OF PERU

As early as 1502, Angelo Trevisan wrote a letter to the King and Queen of Spain in which he described the Indians of a certain Arawak tribe. To quote: "The men, of light color, with long hair and beards, are of fine stature, gentle, and show a desire for new things, and this was indicated by signs." Since Trevisan's letter contains the earliest description of the natives of South America, it should be given the most careful consideration.

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:

¹⁷. . . *Bulletin of the Venezuelan Indians* . . . *op. cit.*, pp. 530-531.

. . . 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.¹⁸

The following is quoted directly from Pedro Pizarro's written account:

. . . Among the ladies there were some tall ones, not among the daughters of the Kings, but among (those of) the *orejones*, their kinsmen. . . . They considered themselves beautiful, and almost all the daughters of these Lords and *orejones* were so. The Indian women of the Guancas, Chachapoyas and Canares were the common women, but most of them beautiful. The rest of the womanhood of this kingdom were plump, neither beautiful nor ugly, but of average appearance. The people of this kingdom of Peru were white but of a tawny hue, and among them the Lords and Ladies were whiter than Spaniards. I saw in this land an Indian woman and a child who did not differ from those who are white and blond. These people say that the latter were the children of the heathen gods.¹⁹

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.²⁰

A. Hyatt Verrill described the Indian races found by the Spaniards in the New World as follows:

. . . the Mayas, the Aztecs and the Incas were not homogenous races of one blood. In all cases they were the result of conquest and confederation of many races and tribes by an intellectually superior people. No doubt these superior people, who formed the ruling classes,—the priests, etc.—were of a distinct type from the bulk of the population. . . . The Incas themselves were, we know from the records of the Spaniards, a much lighter-colored lot than their subjects, and possessed almost Caucasian features. Portraits made from

¹⁸Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

¹⁹Pedro Pizarro, cited in Heyerdahl, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

²⁰Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

life soon after and even during the conquest prove this, and the same is true of the aristocracy of the Aztecs.²¹

C. R. Markham, a historian who wrote a reliable account of the Incas, also informs us that the skin color of the Inca family of Peru was white. To quote:

We see the Incas in the pictures at the church of Santa Ana at Cuzco. The color of the skin was many shades lighter than that of the down-trodden descendants of their subjects; the forehead high, the nose slightly aquiline, the chin and mouth firm, the whole face majestic, refined, and intellectual.²²

One of the ruling Incas received the name of Viracocha (Vē'rā-kō'-chā) (the Peruvian name for the "White-Bearded God") because he was able to grow a beard. Inca Viracocha's sister-wife was called Mana-Runtu, which meant "Mother Egg." She was given that name because of her fair complexion, as she was supposed to be "as white as an egg." Many other examples could be given of white Indians in Peru.

WHITE AMAZONIAN INDIANS

Approximately thirty-five years ago an Englishman named William Montgomery McGovern, Assistant Curator of South American Ethnology of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, made a trip across the entire South American continent. He travelled up the Amazon River in a small boat to the Andes and then continued his journey by horseback across the high mountain range to the Pacific Ocean. He was accompanied by Indians from numerous Amazonian tribes which he encountered as he passed through their various regions. Certain Indians rowed his boat and took care of his supplies on the trip until he passed beyond the boundaries of their tribe, and then those Indians were replaced by members of the next tribe. This process was continued while he crossed the continent. McGovern's principal purposes in making this journey was to study the Indians of the Amazon region and to make a collection of artifacts for the Field Museum. He wrote an interesting book, which he entitled *Jungle Paths and Inca Ruins*.

In numerous passages in the book McGovern described the Indians he encountered while crossing South America. Some of

²¹A. Hyatt Verrill, *The American Indian—North, South and Central America* (New York, 1927), p. 45.

²²C. R. Markham, *The Incas of Peru* (London, 1911), p. 121.

them were nearly as dark in color as Negroes. Others had a yellow cast in their skin and in general appearances reminded him of Mongolians. The majority of the natives of the Amazon Basin however were bronze-colored Indians similar to those ordinarily found throughout both of the Americas. Occasionally tales reached him of tribes of "white Indians," who, it was claimed, were just as white as the Europeans. Those aborigines lived in the jungles, so the reports stated, at some distance from the river. White Indians! How he would like to see them; however, since he was traveling by boat, the possibility of seeing them seemed remote. Finally he saw a white Indian boy who was held as a slave by a tribe of darker-colored Indians. We shall quote his description of that boy later. When McGovern had gone a considerable distance up the Amazon River, he came to a region which was inhabited by a tribe of wild aborigines whom he did not get to see but about whom he heard many tales. Following is his statement regarding them:

In the course of our journey we passed the mouth of an important northern tributary called the Canabury. Although rich in rubber and balata, it remains virtually unexploited, because of the ferocity of its native inhabitants. Unlike the half-civilized or rather quarter-civilized Indians on the banks of the main stream, the wild aborigines who dwell on the Canabury have steadily refused all contact with Europeans. They abandon their homes at the approach of any stranger and fly into the heart of the forest, until the pioneer, lured by the supposed absence of all danger, relaxes his guard, with the usual result that he is taken by surprise attack and murdered.

Many were the gruesome tales concerning this dread river which were poured into our ears by our host. He ticked off the names of various rubber prospectors who had gone up the river, never to return. The few who had escaped from native attacks had brought back stories that the *Indians of the region were virtually white* (strange, this ever-recurring story of white Indians) with semi-European features, although their mode of life is most primitive.²³

Perhaps a month after McGovern and his party of Indians had passed through the country just described, they came to the territory inhabited by the Pagsas Indians. These natives were perhaps the most interesting ones whom he met, since they were "of a very light lemon color, lighter than the average Latin." To quote his statement further:

The interesting question now arises: is the insuperable barrier between the Pagsas and the other Indians due entirely to cultural differences, or can it be traced back to racial differences? . . .

²³William Montgomery McGovern, *Jungle Paths and Inca Ruins* (London, 1927), p. 73.

. . . Whereas most of the Amazonian Indians have retained the broad face and round heads of the Mongolians, all of the Pagsas in this little forest settlement had thin tapering faces and markedly long heads. In many ways the heads of these living Pagsas correspond closely to very primitive skulls which have been dug up in Patagonia and other parts of South America and which are supposed to represent an extinct race. Several scholars, including Joyce, believe that this race had its origin in Europe.

At present it is wise to avoid any sweeping statement or high-flown theory; but at least it is a remarkable fact that, whereas most of the ordinary South American Indians are brown or copper-colored, the Pagsas whom I saw were either much darker or much lighter. I could observe two distinct types among them. One was almost black, though apart from color they showed little or no negroid characteristics. The other resembled the Desano [a tribe of Indians McGovern described earlier] shade, a very light lemon color; in fact it was even lighter than that of the average Latin. From time to time various well-known travelers have come back with stories of white Indians in the depths of the Amazonian forests, although details have always been missing. . . .²⁴

Sometime later while visiting with a group of very dark-colored Indians, Mr. McGovern observed one very light-colored boy among them. To quote his own statement:

One boy from a neighboring *maloka* was an exception to this rule. He was of so light a color and of such a semi-European cast of countenance that I thought at first he must be the half-breed son of some Colombian pioneer, but I at last found that he was a specimen of the light Pagsas type, one who had been captured from his wild roaming brethren several years before. . . .²⁵

William Montgomery McGovern's report of his trip through the Amazons gives us more additional evidence of white Indians and sustains the viewpoint that some of them are still in existence in the more remote and inaccessible regions of the Americas.

²⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 184-185.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 357.

CHAPTER 13

WHITE INDIANS NORTH OF THE RIO GRANDE

WHITE INDIANS OF THE NORTHWESTERN PACIFIC COAST REGION

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 English sea captain and explorer, in 1784 discovered the Nootka Indians who lived on the ocean side of Vancouver Island. He recorded in his journal regarding the natives 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.¹

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.²

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.³

¹James Cook, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean* (London, 1784), vol. 2, p. 303.

²*Ibid.*, p. 367.

³G. Dixon, *A Voyage Round the World, but more Particularly to the Northwest Coast of America Performed in 1785-88* (London, 1789), p. 238.

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 Europeans, as are constantly exposed to the inclemency and alterations of the weather.⁴

WHITE HAIDA INDIANS

Regarding the Haida (Hay'-da) Indians of Queen Charlotte Islands, Hubert Howe Bancroft in 1875 reported that "The few who have seen their faces free from paint pronounce their complexion light. . . ."⁵ Bancroft then quoted Poole, who claimed that he observed that their skin was "nearly as white as ours,"⁶ and Bendel, who held it to be "of a remarkable light color."⁷ Gilbert Malcolm Sproat maintained that "Their young women's skins are as clear and white as those of Englishwomen."⁸ Horatio Hale found some of those coastal islanders "fair in complexion, sometimes with ruddy cheeks."⁹ 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. . . .¹⁰

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.¹¹ 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."¹² According to

⁴George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Around the World* (London, 1798), vol. 2, p. 262.

⁵Hubert Howe Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States* (New York, 1875), vol. 1, p. 157.

⁶Francis Poole, *Queen Charlotte Islands* (London, 1872), cited in *Idem*.

⁷Bendel, cited in *Idem*.

⁸Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life* (London, 1868), p. 24.

⁹Horatio Hale, *Ethnography and Philology* (Philadelphia, 1846), cited in Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

¹⁰Niblack, cited in Thor Heyerdahl, *American Indians of the Pacific* (New York, 1952), p. 83.

¹¹Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

¹²A. C. Haddon, *The Races of Man and the Distribution* (New York, 1924), pp. 33, 128.



—Photographs by Ballard Hadman

Fig. 126: GRANDMOTHER COGO, A WHITE FULLBLOOD HAIDA INDIAN WOMAN
 A superior white fullblood woman, an aristocrat of the Haida tribe, near Ketchikan, Alaska.
 7: WILLIAM COGO, A WHITE FULLBLOOD HAIDA INDIAN AND SON OF GRANDMOTHER COGO
 Observe how similar in appearance he is to the Mayas of Yucatán and Guatemala.



Fig. 128: CHILDREN OF WILLIAM COGO
 The white Haida Indian boy on the left has red hair. The white Indian girl and her brother both have fine brown hair. They are fullblood Indians.

Thor Heyerdahl, Gilbert M. Sproat describes

... a local Indian woman who had “curly, or rather wavy, brown hair,” pointing out that: “Now and then, but rarely, a light-haired native is seen”; ... and Sutil y Mexicana declared that the hair of these aboriginals “varied in colour between reddish, dark, auburn, and black.”¹³

¹³Sproat, cited in Heyerdahl, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

The early explorers who came by sea to the northwestern Pacific coast region state that the Haida Indians were rather large in stature. Many of the men were six feet tall. Also, men of six feet have not infrequently been found among the Kwakintl tribe who inhabited northwestern Vancouver Island. In regards to the Haidas Herbert Howe Bancroft wrote: "The hair is not uniformly coarse and black, but often soft in texture, and of wavy shades of brown."¹⁴ Quite frequently the noses of the Haidas were narrow and aquiline in shape, similar to those on the carvings that appear on many of the monuments in Middle America.

WHITE HAIDA INDIANS TODAY

(Mrs.) Ballard Hadman, an author and artist who lives in Ketchikan, Alaska, read my articles on "White Indians" in *The Improvement Era*. Although she is not a Latter-day Saint, she became interested, especially in the discussion of the white Haida Indians. She wrote me a letter in which she stated that she had spent considerable time in the Haida Indian villages, studying those people, and that many of them at the present time were just as white as any people she had ever seen. She mentioned the fact that she had seen fullblood Haida Indians with hair of fine texture. Some of them had brown hair, some blond, and others even had red hair. Although the Indian villages were a considerable distance from Ketchikan, she volunteered to visit them, and if I were interested in obtaining photographs of some of the white Haidas she would photograph them for me. Of course I was pleased with her kind offer, and so I asked her to visit the Haida villages and photograph some of the white Indians, especially those with red and blond hair. I suggested that she check carefully with the chiefs of the Haida tribe and the ones who knew the genealogies and traditions of the people thoroughly to make sure that the ones she photographed were fullblood Indians. I did not want photos of any whose ancestors had intermarried with the whites.

In July, 1956, Mrs. Hadman flew to the Indian village and very carefully investigated the genealogies of certain Haida families. These Indians, like many other tribes, memorize their genealogies and have an accurate and perfect knowledge of their ancestral lineage. She selected two families who could definitely

¹⁴Bancroft, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 157.

trace their family line back directly through Indian ancestry to the period before the arrival of Europeans. Many of the Haida Indians are fullbloods, none of their ancestors having intermarried with white people.

Mrs. Hadman selected two prominent Haida families, the Cogo family and the Edenso family, to photograph. She took pictures of three generations of each family, tracing the reoccurrence of red hair as it skipped and reoccurred from grandparents through parents and grandchildren. She photographed the grandmother of the Cogo family, her son William, and three of his four children. Two of William Cogo's children have red hair, and the oldest boy and the girl have brown hair. As the reader will observe, all the members of the Cogo family — the three generations — are very white, just as white as any other people. In a letter written on July 31, 1956, Mrs. Hadman described the Cogo family as follows:

The grandmother of the Cogo family is an aristocrat of the Haida tribe. Her clan genealogy is tattooed on the back of her wrist. She was very shy about having her tattoo shown and so I had her hold up the two totems. Please observe the remarkable similarity of the larger totem to Maya carving. She is a woman of great power and distinction.

Her son, William Cogo, and his brothers and sisters all have dark hair, save for one sister with dark auburn red hair. (Note the Maya structure of the head, particularly forehead, nose, set of eyes with deeply hooded lids of William Cogo.) William Cogo's wife has dark hair. She was away with the smallest baby when the photo was taken. That baby is also red haired.¹⁵

Ballard Hadman photographed both the grandfather and grandmother of the Edenso family, their daughter, and her four children. She described them as follows:

Grandfather Edenso would permit only one exposure—I trust you will agree from the expression on his face, it wasn't wise to crowd him—nor would he remove his hat. His hair is dark, but he has grey eyes. His father was known as Red Dan, his hair was so fiery. Grandmother Edenso, his wife, has red hair which is turning grey. Their daughter and daughter's husband both have dark hair. Three of their children, however, are red-haired and one is darkish blond with blue eyes.

She also photographed some of the ancient totems of the Haida Indians. She maintained that representations of Haida gods and important men in their ancestry were carved on the totems, in addition to other figures of ritualistic importance. She was very in-

¹⁵Letter from Mrs. Ballard Hadman to Milton R. Hunter, July 31, 1956.

—Photographs by
Mrs. Ballard Hadman



Fig. 129: GRAND-
FATHER EDENSO,
WHITE HAIDA
INDIAN

Fullblood White Haida
Indians who live near
Ketchikan, Alaska, show-
ing three generations.



Fig. 130: GRAND-
MOTHER EDENSO,
WHITE HAIDA
INDIAN

She has red hair which
is turning gray.



Fig. 131: EDENSO'S
DAUGHTER AND HER
CHILDREN

Three of these fullblood
Haida Indian children
have red hair and the
other one has darkish
blond hair and blue eyes.

terested in the depiction of a white man on each of the four totems shown in the photographs, claiming that they were representations of important white Haida Indians who had earned a place of importance in their traditional history. One of the white men depicted on the totem had red hair.

Mrs. Hadman said that "The Haida people, generally speaking, are extremely intelligent, very clean, and very civilized. They have never been wards of the government. In old days, they kept slaves in quantity, taken in war from other tribes, but themselves were never slaves. They killed themselves rather than submit to slavery, because they were the aristocracy." She informed me, also, that studies had been made of the Haida Indians which connect them with the famed Mayas of Yucatán and Guatemala.

The writer is of the opinion that at least a part of the ancestors of the Haida Indians were the Nephites. This perhaps accounts for the fact that so many of the Indians are white.

WHITE MANDAN INDIANS

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 smallpox epidemic."¹⁶ 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.¹⁷

Early in 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; in 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

¹⁶Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 176.



—Photographs by Ballard Hadman

Fig. 132: ANCIENT TOTEMS OF HAIDA INDIANS

Representations of Haida white gods and important white men in their ancestry are shown on the totems of the Haida Indians. Observe the Hebraic appearance of the profiles of the representations of white men on the totems. Three of the depictions of white men are shown with dark hair; however, according to Mrs. Hadman who photographed these Haida totems, the white man on top of the middle totem is represented as having red hair.

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, 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.¹⁵

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

¹⁵Verandrye, cited in *ibid.*, p. 177.

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.¹⁹

Writers have speculated regarding the origin of the white Mandan Indians. Catlin suggested "that the Mandan might be descended from the Welsh king, Madoc, . . ." ²⁰ 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, completely to account for the white blood in the Mandans. To quote Herrmann:

. . . and furthermore, only a handful of men, whose biological force cannot have 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 behind this strange and now vanishing tribe? We do not know.²¹

If Herrmann's conclusions are correct, one needs to look elsewhere than to European infiltrations to find the cause of the white Mandan Indians. Probably another quotation from the same author will throw further light on the subject:

¹⁹George Catlin, *The North American Indians . . . written during eight years travel amongst the wildest tribes of Indians in North America, 1832-1839* (Edinburgh, 1926), cited in Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 177.

²¹Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

. . . 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. . . .²²

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. However, 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.

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 Christian teachings the Mandans had "long before the first missionaries reached" these Indians.

WHITE CATAWBA INDIANS OF SOUTH CAROLINA

In recent years white people have intermarried to a certain extent with the Catawba (Cà-taw'-bà) Indians of South Carolina; however, there are still a number of fullbloods among them. Some of these have dark skins while others are positively white.

S. T. Blue, an outstanding man, is the chief of the tribe. One of his ancestors belonged to the white race, but his wife Louisa is a white, fullblood Indian. Their sons and daughters have black hair and white skins. They are handsome people. I have never seen more

²²*Ibid.*, p. 178.

beautiful children than Chief Blue's grandchildren. The contrast between their clear, white skins, black hair and dark sparkling eyes intensifies their whiteness and attractiveness.

Practically all of the members of the Catawba tribe belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Chief Blue and his wife are Catawba Indians, South Carolina.



Fig. 133: CHIEF S. T. BLUE AND HIS WIFE, LOUISA

LIGHT-COMPLEXIONED CHEROKEE WOMEN

William Bartram, who was 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 Indians 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.²³

²³William Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia* (Philadelphia, 1791), cited in Chapman J. Milling, *Red Carolinians* (Kingsport, Tennessee, 1940), p. 6.

WHITE ZUNI AND HOPI INDIANS OF ARIZONA

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 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.²⁴

Elder Martin D. Bushman of Snowflake, Arizona, has served several missions laboring with the Indians of Arizona and New Mexico. Two years ago he informed me that he had seen a number of Zuni and Hopi Indians who were light-complexioned and some that were actually white. He described one white Hopi woman who he said was as white as any woman, regardless of race, that he had ever seen. This Indian woman, he stated, has beautiful, clear white skin, fine brown hair, and blue eyes. She is the mother of several children. Some of them are as white as their mother while the others are dark-skinned like their father.

I suggested to Brother Bushman that he investigate the lineage of the white Hopi woman for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not she had any white ancestors. Very shortly before this book came from the press, he visited me at my home and reported that he had investigated her lineage very carefully and had received the positive assurance from her mother and other informed members of the tribe that this white Hopi woman is a fullblood Indian. Elder Bushman is going to photograph that Indian family for me.

The Hopi and Zuni Indians are very intelligent people. According to tests given by the U. S. Indian Agency, the members of these two tribes rate higher intellectually than do Indians of other tribes in the United States, and, it is claimed, even higher

²⁴Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff—History of His Life and Labors as Recorded in His Daily Journals* (Salt Lake City, 1916), p. 523.

than the whites. These Indians show unusual ability in the handicrafts. The Zunis are especially masterful in making silver jewelry. In general appearance, size of stature, and intellectual powers, the



Fig. 134: LOUISA BLUE AND MRS. ARNOLD BLUE, CATAWBA INDIANS

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

Hopi and Zuni resemble the Maya of southern Mexico and Central America more than they do the other Indian tribes who reside in the United States. It is not surprising that President Wilford Woodruff stated that they were descendants of the Nephites.

CONCLUSIONS

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”²⁵ but following the destruction of the Nephite nation, those who remained “. . . shall be numbered among the Lamanites.”²⁶ Obviously these promises have been fulfilled in the white Indians who reside among their darker-skinned brethren, as has been pointed out in this chapter. 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].”²⁷ 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.”²⁸ This shall come about as a result of the Lord having once again established 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.²⁹ How could this revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith be fulfilled if none of the seed of the Nephites and their associates have 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.

²⁵2 Nephi 3:3.

²⁶Alma 45:14.

²⁷1 Nephi 13:30.

²⁸2 Nephi 9:53.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 29:12-13; D. & C. 3:16-18.

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