

(Lehi. 1921 to 1980)
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A Detailed Chronology of LDS Thought on the Geography of Lehi's Journey from Jerusalem to the New World

1921-----> 1980

Year¹ Person
Primary Source²

Statements by Church Authorities

Quotes from Significant Books, "Articles," & Events

[Significant Theoretical or Illustrated Models, or Illustrations Related to Book of Mormon Geography]

Notes*

Note 1: The mark ^ after the year is purely a research tool indicating that a copy of the article or book is on file in the author's personal library.

Note 2: The year (listed on the left) for the event or quote is not always the same as the date of the primary source (listed on the right) from which the information was taken. If the source information (the later publication of the information) was significant, in and of itself, to the later time period in which it came forth, there will also be a separate listing for that later year. When appropriate, additional sources will be listed.

1921[^] Willard Young

"Notes on Geographical References in the Book of Mormon", n.d. LDS Church Historical Dept., MS 5094 4.

Note* This is a typescript from an item from the Church Historical Department (MS 5094 4). The title is, "Notes on Book of Mormon geography" [n.d.]. At the top of page 1 we find, "Note in the corner says @(Locations made on Map of Honduras of 1854 by E. G. Squier.)" Also on the lower half of page 1 we find "Ms. p. 2" implying that this was copied from another manuscript. On the last page there is a note which reads, "There is no trace of a date on this material, but obviously it is post 1920 for he refers to that edition."

This is a valuable document because it represents the only known details of Willard Young's Book of Mormon geography, which in itself represented the first LDS attempt at a Limited Mesoamerican perspective.

The notes are as follows:

The sea mentioned on page 39 (of 1920 edition), v. 8, is located in the preceding pp. of the Book.

P. 40, v. 23, 25. Bay of Fonseca is 13 deg. no. and 87-88 deg. west. Nephi and some of his brothers went north to the Goascoran River. Lehi died in the Gulf Region. Nephi et al followed up the river over the divide and made settlements on the lands just north of the river. Names of some of these settlements are the same as they are in the BM.

...

Ms. p. 2:

...

Lehi landed in the Bay of Fonseca and his son Nephi soon went north up the R. Goascoran. In the BM, after mentioning the place of landing there is not any reference whatever to a single descendant of Lehi going south of the summit between the Atlantic Ocean of the Bay of Hond. to the Pacific Ocean.

[OBTAIN COPY OF MAP OF HONDURAS OF 1854 BY E. G. SQUIRE]

Source: Personal files of John L. Sorenson.

[1921 Theoretical Model Willard Young LIMITED CENTRAL AMERICA]
L.S.=Honduras / N.N.=East. end of Guatemala / L.N.=Guatemala-->Chiapas / H.C.= near Jalapa, Guatemala
Source: See Janne M. Sjodahl, *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*, 1927. Sjodahl indicates that Young was among four persons who in 1921 presented their opinions at "what appears to be a quasi-official meeting at Church headquarters on the question of geography." Information listed in John L. Sorenson, *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book*, p. 221]

1921 B. H. Roberts

Janne M. Sjodahl, *Diary, archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. See also B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), 3:503.**

On January 22, 1921, at a meeting of a Book of Mormon committee originally organized to review material relative the a new edition of the Book of Mormon, Elder B H. Roberts said that if it were possible to set aside one of Joseph Smith's uncanonized revelations designating the coast of Chile in South America as the place of Lehi's landing, "it would be easier to reply to adverse critics of the Book of Mormon." Otherwise, "[th]e enormous distances to travel present serious difficulty."

(See the notation for 1909; also 1938)

1922^ B. H. Roberts

"A Book of Mormon Study", in B. H. Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon, 2nd ed., ed. Brigham D. Madsen (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992*

The following are some of the more pertinent interpretations on Book of Mormon geography and culture from B. H. Roberts' "A Book of Mormon Study":

In the first place there is a certain lack of perspective in the things the book relates as history that points quite clearly to an undeveloped mind as their origin. The narrative proceeds in characteristic disregard of conditions necessary to its reasonableness, as if it were a tale told by a child, with utter disregard for consistency. For example, there is the story of Lehi's departure from Jerusalem with his small colony; its landing in America; and its early movements in the land of promise. Let us note a few of its difficulties:

The first part of the journey is a three days' travel from Jerusalem to "near the shores of the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 2:4-6). It may be thought a small matter, but the nearest point from Jerusalem to the Red Sea is about one hundred and seventy miles, and even if allowance is made for some change in the Red Sea's extension northward, in ancient times, the distance could scarcely be covered in three days.

The manner of the colony's traveling appears to have been on foot, carrying their "tents and provisions" with them. If they were helped in this three days' journey by the use of domestic animals common to the country and in general use at the time--the ass, the ox, the camel, the horse--singularly enough, no mention is made of the fact. Neither at the beginning of the trek nor at any time through their eight years' journey in the wilderness of Arabia, until coming to the shores of the Arabian Sea, nor at the time of embarking on the sea for the journey to the promised land, is there any mention made of the use of domestic animals. It is always, when making their several removals towards the land of promise, "and we did take our tents and depart into the wilderness," etc. In the second removal, after leaving Jerusalem, however, it is said that they "did gather together whatsoever things they should carry into the wilderness, and all the remainder of our provisions which the Lord had given unto us, and we did take seed of every kind, that we might carry into the wilderness." But how this was conveyed, by beasts of burden, or on the backs of the people, nothing is said.

At this point it may be well to note that Lehi's colony was a very small one. All told it could not have numbered more than thirty souls and part of these were children of tender age, and several were people well advanced in life, so that the amount of "provisions," "seeds of every kind" together with their "tents," that they could carry in this journey could not be very considerable without the use of beasts of burden. Yet if they were employed no mention is made of that fact, and the general impression of the story is that they were without beasts of burden in their whole eight years' journey. No mention is made of such animals, either of taking them along or leaving them behind when beginning the sea voyage; but as soon as they arrive "to the promised land" (I quote the first edition of the Book of Mormon), they speak of finding "beasts in the forests of every kind." And then proceed to enumerate the domestic animals, "the cow and the ox, and the ass and the horse, and the goat and the wild goat, and all manner of wild animals which were for the use of man" (1 Nephi 18:25). And all this without reference to how they got there in the wilderness of the New World; and how they happened to be domesticated, and already for the use of the New Colonists (cf. 2 Nephi 5:11)!

Lehi's colony, it must be remembered, came to an empty America, so far as human inhabitants were concerned--according to the Book of Mormon accounting of things. And if it should be urged that the Jaredite people had previously possessed the land, and the claim made that these domestic animals found by Lehi's colony were left in the continent by that people, then it should be remembered that the Nephtie people never came in contact with the Jaredite race, that the latter was annihilated to the last man somewhere in the North Continent, while the Nephites, according to the general belief, landed in South America, in Chile about thirty degrees south latitude--[An alleged revelation to Joseph Smith on the subject of the course of Lehi's travels from Jerusalem to America says: "they traveled nearly a south, southeast direction, until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude; then, nearly east to the sea of Arabia, then sailed in a southeast direction, and landed on the continent of South America, in Chile, thirty degrees south latitude" (Richards & Little, Compendium, Art., "Gems from the History of Joseph Smith," p.

289).

There is some ground for doubting if this item is a revelation (see this writer's *New Witness for God*, 3:501-3); but the compendium statement has the support of a very similar passage in the writings of Orson Pratt (see Pratt's Works, edition of 1851, "Remarkable visions," p. 7). And these two passages may be said to represent the views of the Mormon People.] and from three to four thousand miles south of any lands occupied by the Jaredites! So that the likelihood of the domestic animals found by the Nephites in the "forests" of South America, having come from previously owned Jaredite stock, is exceedingly remote. Besides there is the problem of any domestic animals left over from the Jaredite occupancy--the length of time considered since these were under the control of man--the problem of their having become utterly wild--thoroughly undomesticated; where as these animals found by the Nephites in South America are spoken of in such fashion as to lead one to think they were at once available for use (cf. 1 Nephi 18:25; and 2 Nephi 5:11). [pp. 251-253; 257-258]

Note* Upon examining of a xerox copy of Robert's original manuscript ^("Roberts' Manuscripts Revealed: A Photographic Reproduction of Mormon Historian B. H. Roberts' Secret Studies on the Book of Mormon." Salt Lake City, Utah: Modern Microfilm Company, 1980, pp. 294-295), I found that what appears in brackets in Brigham Madsen's book does NOT appear in brackets in the manuscript; rather it appears in parenthesis. This is significant here because Roberts makes note of the Compendium information of Lehi's Travels, but NOT anything about the Lehi's Travels statement that was supposedly part of the manuscripts of John Bernhisel given to the Church in 1879. This information would have been known to at least Joseph F. Smith while he worked in the Church Historian's Office (see the 1879 and 1845 notations in vol. 1-Lehi' Travels). Interestingly, Roberts turns to Orson Pratt ("Remarkable Visions"--see the 1840 notation) for his support. Was he not informed by Joseph F. Smith? Did he not come across the Bernhisel note himself in the Church Historian's Office?

1924 [Louis Hills](#)

1927^ [Janne Sjordahl](#)

"Suggested Key to Book of Mormon Geography," *The Improvement Era*, 30, September 1927, 974-87, 1002.

Bruce A. Van Orden writes in his paper, "George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjordahl on Book of Mormon Geography" (August 1981), that Janne Sjordahl's feelings on Book of Mormon geography seem to be much more refined than those of Reynolds. Sjordahl for many years had investigated various theories before he published his own conclusions. In 1921 he met in what appears to be a quasi-official meeting at Church headquarters on the question of geography. Joel Ricks and Colonel Willard Young presented their individual feelings at the meeting. Sjordahl recorded these theories together with another one by Stuart Bagley as well as Reynolds's theory in *The Improvement Era* in 1927 ("Suggested Key to Book of Mormon Geography," *The Improvement Era*, 30, September 1927, 974-87, 1002). This material would later comprise chapter seventeen in his 1927 book *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon* published the same year. For that reason the reader is also referred to the 1927 Introduction notations for excerpts from the text.

Starting on page 975, J. M. Sjodahl writes in detail of things having to do with configuration, dimension, direction, and topography. He includes the data from all the very early Book of Mormon geography experts. He summarizes (1) the Reynolds 1880 model first, yet he granted it was only one of a number of "theories," and then he includes (2) Joel Ricks of Logan, Utah; (3) Col. Willard Young; (4) Stuart Bagley and (5) himself.

[1] A Well Known [Traditional Hemispheric] Theory [by Elder George Reynolds]

The best known theory concerning the geography of the Book of Mormon is that represented by the late George Reynolds in his "Story of the Book of Mormon." According to this theory . . . Lehi and his little flock journeyed across the peninsula of Arabia to its eastern coast. Here they built a ship, in compliance with divine instructions. When it was finished, and the provisions were taken on board, they embarked and crossed the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, and after an eventful voyage they landed at a point near where the city of Valparaiso now is situated, in Chile. From here they gradually spread northward . . .

According to the same theory, the attendants who had charge of the young prince of Judah, Mulek, the son of Zedekiah, were brought across the great waters and landed in the southern portion of North America. . . .

To those who hold this theory, the entire North America is, in the Book of Mormon, called "Mulek," because the Lord brought Mulek into the land. South America is, for a similar reason, called "Lehi," because this great colonist landed there. . . .

[2] This [Hemispheric] Theory [Slightly] Modified [by Elder Joel Ricks]

According to Elder Ricks, who has published a "Helps to the Study of the Book of Mormon," . . . the colony of Lehi landed on the western coast of South America, in northern Chile, and built up the civilizations in the high valleys of the Andes. About 200 years B.C., Nephites moved from the districts about Quito [land of Nephi] into the valleys opening to the Caribbean, where they came upon the Mulekites, with whom they amalgamated and founded the kingdom of Zarahemla.

Note* Ricks has modified the Hemispheric Theory in that while he has Lehi landing in northern Chile, he has them migrating northward before establishing a land of first inheritance

[3] The Central American [Limited Mesoamerican] Theory [by Willard Young]

A theory, of more recent date, holds that the geographical scene of the history of the Book of Mormon is confined to a comparatively small area of Central America, viz., Guatemala, British Honduras, part of Yucatan, and Salvador. In this area, it is thought, the Jaredites, the Mulekites and the followers of Lehi, all established their first colonies . . .

Lehi and his colony, according to Colonel Young, left the Gulf of Persia and crossed the Indian and the Pacific Oceans and landed on the shore of Salvador in Central America.

[4] Still another Theory [by Elder Stuart Bagley]:

Elder Stuart Bagley, who also has studied the subject thoroughly, agrees in some particulars with Colonel Young. In others he takes a different view. The City of Nephi he finds at Uxmal . . .

Note* Although Bagley locates the city of Nephi in the Yucatan peninsula at Uxmal, he has Lehi landing on the southern coast of Guatemala near Izapa on his future maps. However, in this article no maps are included.

[5] Material for a Theory [Janne Sjodahl now proposes his Modified Hemispheric Theory]

In trying to form a consistent theory on Book of Mormon geography, we have as material, in the first place, the statements in the Book, itself. These are the foundation and the substance. Nothing that contradicts any of them can be admitted.

Then we have certain statements concerning the subject, which can be traced back to some of the first leaders of the Church, who were the associates of the Prophet Joseph himself, and these cannot be set aside lightly, even if they are regarded as mere individual opinions; for even an opinion on a Book of Mormon question, expressed by one who, undoubtedly, had it from the Prophet himself, must be of more weight than, for instance, my opinion, if it differs from theirs. This is, I suppose, a self-evident proposition.

I refer now especially to the positive statements by Frederick G. Williams, and Orson Pratt concerning the landing of Lehi south of the Isthmus of Darien, and the just as positive assertion in the Times and Seasons, which was edited by the Prophet Joseph, to the effect that the city of Zarahemla stood in Central America, where also the boundary line between Bountiful and Desolation was drawn. (Times and Seasons, Oct. 1, 1842) Such statements, it seems to me, cannot consistently be set aside for the sake of any theory.

In the third place, we have now a great amount of archaeological and ethnological material concerning the American Indians, . . .

[p. 985] The suggestions here offered assume that Lehi landed in South America some distance south of the Isthmus and that he proceeded to the Titicaca basin in Bolivia and the valley of Cuzco, in Peru, where he died. Shortly afterwards, Nephi and his faithful followers separated themselves from their brethren and, after having journeyed "in the wilderness for the space of many days," established themselves first in Ecuador, and then colonized the lofty table lands of Colombia, in what they called the Land of Nephi. . . .

Note* In view of the fact that Janne Sjodahl was privy to the geographical discussions of the 1820 Book of Mormon Committee, and also to those ideas which continued to be bantered about in meetings after the publication of 1821 edition; and in view of the fact that Sjodahl would not publish until the year 1827, I would have to surmise that what Sjodahl says above is, for the most part, what the committee came to a resolution upon concerning the location of Lehi's landing. It appears that the doubts B. H. Roberts' expressed in 1909 concerning the Lehi's Travels statement were in general overridden by other Authorities--meaning that the general consensus was that early members of the Church (and apparently Joseph Smith) believed that Lehi landed somewhere near the 30th degree south parallel in Chile, South America.

[1927^ J. M. Sjodahl](#)

An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon,SLC: Deseret News Press, 1927

Sjodahl's 1927 book is significant for a couple of reasons. The first reason is because Sjodahl was privy to the discussions of the 1820-21 Church committee responsible for reviewing the evidence on Book of Mormon geography. Thus Sjodahl's writings can be considered as perhaps a distillation of the ideas expressed in those meetings. The second reason is that Sjodahl's writings represented a paradigm shift in Book of Mormon geographical theory to a Modified Hemispheric Theory. In this approach, previous authoritative statements regarding Lehi's landing in Chile and the New York Hill Cumorah were supported, but the Narrow Neck was extended northward to reach the Isthmus of Tehuantepec to accommodate the rich traditions and antiquities located in Central America. In other words, Sjodahl combined both the Hemispheric Theory and a Central American Theory

Beginning in chapter 5, Sjodahl writes concerning the travels of Lehi. From information found here (both in the text and in a footnote) we find Sjodahl's support for previous authoritative statements that Lehi

landed in Chile. He writes that not only was Frederick G. Williams the author of the Lehi's Travels statement, but that the Lehi's Travels statement reflected the views of the prophet Joseph Smith. Moreover, Sjordahl considered this evidence more valid than any reasoning against it.

Chapter 5

After spending a couple of pages on the condition in Jerusalem when Lehi left, Sjordahl writes the following:

The Journey of Lehi. Lehi, at the head of his little company, began his long journey by traveling three days into the wilderness, and then camping in a valley by the Red Sea, which he called, after one of his sons, Lemuel. This may have been at the northern extremity of the Gulf of Akabah, near Ezion-geber. . . .

From the valley of Lemuel he traveled four days, in a southerly or south-easterly direction, and then camped at a place which he called Shazer. Continuing in the same direction for "many days" and subsisting chiefly on such food as could be procured by the use of bows and arrows, slings and stones, he came to a place which he called Nahom. Here Ishmael died. . . .

From Nahom the little company took an easterly course (1 Ne. 17:1) and led a nomadic life for eight years (1 Ne. 17:4) in the country they traversed. At the end of that time they arrived at the sea shore, and named the country Bountiful, because of the abundance of the good things of the earth which they found there, and which they must have appreciated after their long sojourn in the wilderness.

In the Country of the Sabaeans. The road traveled by Lehi from the Red Sea must have led through the country of the Sabaeans, in the Arabian peninsula, whence the Queen of Sheba, or Saba, came to visit King Solomon in Jerusalem. (1 Kgs. 10:10-13) The Sabaeans were known of old as exporters of gold (Isa. 60:6), precious stones, and perfumes (Jeremiah 6:20) But whether Lehi had any commercial or social dealings with them the record does not state.

Another Long "Trek." How many miles Lehi traveled to the sea coast we know not, but he must have covered a considerable distance in eight years. . . .

In the Land Bountiful. In the Land of Bountiful, Nephi, guided by divine inspiration, constructed a ship large enough to accommodate the entire company, from 60 to 80 souls, (George Reynolds, Story of the Book of Mormon, p. 44) and to hold the necessary supplies. In this vessel they were "driven forth before the wind towards the Promised Land" (1 Ne. 18:8), which they reached after a perilous and eventful voyage that lasted "many days." (1 Ne. 18:23)

Other Long Voyages. It would be erroneous to suppose that long voyages were unknown to the Hebrews at this time. Herodotus tells us that Phoenician sailors circumnavigated Africa some time during the reign of Pharaoh Necho. They are supposed to have set sail at some Red Sea port and to have been more than two years in completing the voyage, having stopped at convenient places, to raise crops. The story is, of course, doubted by some eminent critics, but it is accepted by others, and, on the whole, it is not safe to discredit the ancient historians without reasons; for they are often vindicated, as more light is shed on their age. . . .

A voyage is said to have been made about 500 B. C. by Hanno, a Carthaginian. With sixty vessels carrying thousands of persons, Hanno sailed from Carthage along the Mediterranean coasts and through the Strait of Gibraltar and southward along the coast of Africa. Here colonies were established. A century later another Greek, Pytheas of Massilia, again sailed through the "Pillars of Hercules," as the Strait was called, and turned northward to find England. From this time (340 B.C.), England and Ireland appear upon the world map. Phoenician sailors during these centuries were exploring the Indian Ocean and extending the knowledge of the world toward the East. We know that navigation was well developed in the early days of man, and we may safely regard the voyage of Lehi as one of the many great achievements of past ages. . . .

Where Lehi Landed. Just where the colony of Lehi landed in America the sacred record does not state.

(footnote--see note "A" below) They did not, however, remain long at the place of landing. It is clear from 1 Ne. 18:24, 25, that as soon as the colonists had raised a crop and obtained the necessary provisions, they continued their journey "in the wilderness," until they came to a part of the country where animals of various kinds roamed the hills and grazed in the forests, and they found "all manner of ore," and especially gold, silver, and copper. The following from the Times and Seasons is important regarding the question of landing:

When we read in the Book of Mormon that Jared and his brother came on to this continent from the confusion and scattering at the Tower, and lived here more than a thousand years, and covered the whole continent from sea to sea, with towns and cities; and that Lehi went down by the Red Sea to the great Southern Ocean, and crossed over to this land and landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien, and improved the country according to the word of the Lord, as a branch of the house of Israel . . . The extract below, comes as near the real fact as the four Evangelists do to the crucifixion of Jesus. Surely "facts are stubborn things." It will be as it ever has been the world will prove Joseph Smith a true prophet by circumstantial evidence, (in experiments), as they did Moses and Elijah. Now read Stephens' story.

According to Fuentes, the chronicler of the kingdom of Guatemala, the kings of Quiche and Cachiquel were descended from the Toltecan Indians, who, when they came into this country, found it already inhabited by people of different nations. According to the manuscripts of Don Juan Torres, the grandson of the last king of the Quiches, which was in the possession of the lieutenant general appointed by Pedro de Alvarado, and which Fuentes says he obtained by means of Father Francis Vasques, the historian of the order of San Francis, the Toltecas themselves descended from the house of Israel, who were released by Moses from the tyranny of Pharaoh, and after crossing the Red Sea, fell into Idolatry. To avoid the reproaches of Moses or from fear of his inflicting upon them some chastisement, they separated from him and his brethren, and under the guidance of Tanub, their chief, passed from one continent to the other, to a place which they called the seven caverns, a part of the kingdom of Mexico, where they founded the celebrated city of Tula.-Times and Seasons, Sept 15, 1842; Vol. 3, No. 22. (The italics in this extract are mine)

In the Times and Seasons (Nauvoo, Ill., Oct. 1, 1842) the following leading article is found:

Since our 'Extract' was published from Mr. Stephens' "Incidents of Travel," &c., we have found another important fact relating to the truth of the Book of Mormon. Central America, or Guatemala [sic] is situated north of the Isthmus of Darien and once embraced several hundred miles of territory from north to south--The city of Zarahemla, burnt at the crucifixion of the Savior, and rebuilt afterwards, stood upon this land as will be seen from the following words in the book of Alma:

And now it was only the distance of a day and a half's journey for a Nephite, on the line Bountiful and the land Desolation, from the east to the west sea; and thus the land of Nephi, and the land of Zarahemla was nearly surrounded by water: there being a small neck of land between the land northward and the land southward [See Book of Mormon d edition, page 280-81 (Alma 22:32)].

It is certainly a good thing for the excellency and veracity, of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, that the ruins of Zarahemla have been found where the Nephites left them: and that a large stone with engravings upon it, as Mosiah said; and a 'large round stone, with sides sculptured in hieroglyphics,' as Mr. Stephens has published, is also among the left remembrances of the, (to him,) lost and unknown. We are not ageing [sic] to declare positively that the ruins of Carriage are those of Zarahemla, but when the land and the stones and the books tell the story so plain, we are of the opinion, that it would require more proof than the Jews could bring to prove the disciples stole the body of Jesus from the tomb, to prove that the ruins of the city in question, are not one of those referred to in the Book of Mormon. . . .

It will not be a bad plan to compare Mr. Stephens' ruined cities with those of the Book of Mormon.

The Prophet Joseph was the editor of the paper at this time.

Note "A": In the library connected with the office of the Church Historian, Salt Lake City, there is a sheet of paper on which the statement is written that the landing was in 30 degrees south. That would be in Chile, about where the city of Coquimbo now is situated. The statement is in the handwriting of Frederick G. Williams, at one time counselor to the Prophet, and it is found on a sheet on which a revelation, D&C 7 in the D&C, also has been copied. That revelation was given in the year 1829. The presumption, therefore, is that the lines relating to the landing of Lehi were also penned at an early date, and certainly before the year 1837, when Frederick G. Williams was removed from his position as counselor. If this is correct, the statement of Williams would undoubtedly reflect the views of the Prophet Joseph on that question.

Orson Pratt held that view. In his *Remarkable Visions*, the first edition of which, I understand, was published in 1840, consequently some time before the martyrdom of the prophet, he says that Lehi "landed upon the western coast of South America," and in 1874, when he was the Church Historian, in an article written for an encyclopedia, he expressed the same thought more fully, stating that the landing took place, "as is believed, not far from the 30th degree south latitude." (See *Mill. Star*, Vol. 38. pp. 691-2) The expression, "as is believed," I take to mean, "that Orson Pratt did not advance a theory of his own on this question, but stated what was held to be true among his associates, or some of them, as well as by himself.

Elder Franklin D. Richards expressed the same view in his *Ready References*, and Elder George Reynolds, in the *Story of the Book of Mormon*, p. 41, says Lehi landed "at a point where the city of Valparaiso, in Chile, now stands."

All this is evidence that must be weighed when the question of the landing place of Lehi is considered. It cannot be set aside by any amount of a priori reasoning. (p. 112)

Starting on page 418, J. M. Sjodahl writes in detail of things having to do with configuration, dimension, direction, and topography. He includes the data from all the very early Book of Mormon geography experts. He summarizes (1) the Reynolds 1880 model first, yet he granted it was only one of a number of "theories," and then he includes (2) Joel Ricks of Logan, Utah; (3) Col. Willard Young; (4) Stuart Bagley and (5) himself.

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(4) Another theory of Book of Mormon Geography (by Elder Stuart Bagley):

After the Jaredites are safely landed in Central America we can best forget them so far as the Nephite geography is concerned, Elder Bagley remarks. It is believed, he continues, that the ruins of Uxmal in western Yucatan are the remains of the city of Nephi. . . .

[1927 Charles Stuart Bagley LIMITED HEMISPHERIC]

L.S.=Yucatan & Guatemala / N.N.=Isth. of Tehuantepec / L.N.= Note Specified / H.C.= N.Y.
Sources: J.M. Sjodahl, An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon, 1927. The fact that Sjodahl felt the need to summarize Bagley's theory indicates that it had not been previously published. See also Bagley's "A New Approach to the Geography of the Book of Mormon," in Papers of the Fourteenth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures, ed. by Forrest R. Hauck, pp. 70-86, Provo: BYU Dept. of Extension Publications, 1963. See also two unpublished manuscripts by Bagley: "The Limhi Expedition," and "A Textual Geography of the Book of Mormon," both dated 1985, copies in FARMS archives.

(5) Material for a Theory [Janne Sjodahl now proposes his Modified Hemispheric Theory]:

In trying to form a consistent theory on Book of Mormon geography, we have as material, in the first place, the statements in the Book, itself. These are the foundation and the substance. Nothing that contradicts any of them can be admitted.

Then we have certain statements concerning the subject, which can be traced back to some of the first leaders of the Church, who were the associates of the Prophet Joseph himself, and these cannot be set aside lightly, even if they are regarded as mere individual opinions; for even an opinion on a Book of Mormon question, expressed by one who, undoubtedly, had it from the Prophet himself, must be of more weight than, for instance, my opinion, if it differs from theirs. This is, I suppose, a self-evident proposition.

I refer now especially to the positive statements by Frederick G. Williams, and Orson Pratt concerning the landing of Lehi south of the Isthmus of Darien, and the just as positive assertion in the Times and Seasons, which was edited by the Prophet Joseph, to the effect that the city of Zarahemla stood in Central America, where also the boundary line between Bountiful and Desolation was drawn. (Times and Seasons, Oct. 1, 1842) Such statements, it seems to me, cannot consistently be set aside for the sake of any theory.

In the third place, we have now a great amount of archaeological and ethnological material concerning the American Indians, . . .

The suggestions here offered assume that Lehi landed in South America some distance south of the Isthmus and that he proceeded to the Titicaca basin in Bolivia and the valley of Cuzco, in Peru, where he died. Shortly afterwards, Nephi and his faithful followers separated themselves from their brethren and, after having journeyed "in the wilderness for the space of many days," established themselves first in Ecuador, and then colonized the lofty table lands of Colombia, in what they called the Land of Nephi. . . .

[1927 Janne M. Sjordahl MODIFIED HEMISPHERIC]

L.S.=South of Isth. of Tehuantepec / N.N.= Isth. of Tehuan. / L.N.=N. of Isth. of Tehuan. / H.C.= N.Y.

Source: J.M. Sjordahl, "Suggested Key to Book of Mormon Geography," in *Improvement Era* 30 (September 1927), pp. 974-87. Also *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon, 1927*]

Note* In view of the fact that Janne Sjordahl was privy to the geographical discussions of the 1820 Book of Mormon Committee, and also to those ideas which continued to be bantered about in meetings after the publication of 1821 edition; and in view of the fact that Sjordahl would not publish until the year 1827, I would have to surmise that what Sjordahl says above is, for the most part, what the committee came to a resolution upon concerning the location of Lehi's landing. It appears that the doubts B. H. Roberts' expressed in 1909 concerning the Lehi's Travels statement were in general overridden by other Authorities--meaning that the general consensus was that early members of the Church (and apparently Joseph Smith) believed that Lehi landed somewhere near the 30th degree south parallel in Chile, South America.

1928^ Jesse Alvin Washburn Chronology Chart: Bible and Book of Mormon Events, Provo, UT:
n.p.,
1928.

Washburn writes: "This work is an attempt to suggest the relationship, in point of time, at least, between the events of the bible and Book of Mormon history and other important world happenings." He then presents a long fold-out chronological chart plus some maps. One map shows the possible journey of the Jaredites from Babel to the Mediterranean Sea. (see below) Another shows the possible routes of the Jaredites and Nephites to the Americas. The Jaredites are traced through the Mediterranean across the Atlantic Ocean. The Nephites are traced across the Indian Ocean to the Pacific and then there are two possible routes illustrated with question marks: one to Central America and one to South America. (see below)

Note* In 1937 this booklet would be republished under the title *From Eden to Diahman: Chronology Chart* and with dual authorship: Jesse A Washburn and J. Niles Washburn on the cover, but with only J. A. Washburn attributed to the *Chronology Chart*. It would not contain the separate maps as in the 1928 version. Rather a map of much reduced size would be inserted within the chronology chart. It is interesting, however that in this reduced-size map the Jaredites are now given two possible routes: one through the Mediterranean and across the Atlantic Ocean, and the other across Asia and the Pacific Ocean to Central America. The Nephites are illustrated as coming the Central America with no alternative option of going to South America. This is significant because it represents the Washburn's evolution in their analysis of the internal Book of Mormon geography.

[1928 Map: Important Events from Babel to Babylonian Cap. Jesse A. Washburn, *Chronology Chart: Bible and Book of Mormon Events*, Provo, UT: n.p., 1928.]

[1928 Map: From the Jaredites to Modern Times Map III.. Jesse A. Washburn, Chronology Chart: Bible and Book of Mormon Events, Provo, UT: n.p., 1928.]

1928^ LDS Church Sunday School Lessons for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,
Published quarterly by the Deseret Sunday School Union Board, printed at
Salt Lake City, Utah, 1928

January 8, 1928 Lesson 1
Book of Mormon Department,
Course "A"

On the following pages you are furnished . . . the Book of Mormon text in a condensed and somewhat simplified form. . . .

Chapter 2
The Departure into the Wilderness

The Lord commanded my father in a dream that he should take his family and depart into the wilderness. . . . He came down by the shore of the Red Sea and traveled in the wilderness with his family . . .

[1929 John Henry Evans](#)

Message and Characters of the Book of Mormon, Salt Lake City: n.p., 1929

On page 56 we find the following:

It is generally supposed that Lehi's colony landed on the coast of South America, near where the city of Valparaiso, Chile, now stands. From this place they spread out over the land until the descendants of Lehi occupied the entire South American continent, and later the North American continent.

Source: ^Weldon and Butterworth, Book of Mormon Claims and Evidences, vol 3, p. 187.

[1934^ J. M. Sjodahl](#)

"New Book of Mormon Evidences," in Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star 96 (17 May 1934): pp. 305-307.

J. M. Sjodahl presents some "evidences" and historical perspectives relative to Lehi's journey through Arabia. He writes:

Recent exploration of the French aviators, Captain Cormiglion Molinier and Andrew Malraux, should be of special interest to students of the Book of Mormon.

M. Malraux, about a month ago reported that he and his companion had flown over the ruins of an ancient city which they believed to be the remains of the once great capital of the Queen of Sheba. They gave the location as near the Persian gulf, about one thousand miles southeast of Jerusalem.

The report dwells particularly on the fact that the Arabs living there are so hostile that a landing among

them would be death to explorers, even if they could overcome the difficulties of procuring food and water. In fact, a later attempt to land near the ruins had to be abandoned on account of the murderous hostility of the natives.

This is, indeed, in my judgment, an instructive commentary on the account of Nephi of the journey of Lehi and his companions from Jerusalem to the coast of the ocean. For they must have passed through this territory.

Lehi travelled, as is well known, southward to the Red Sea, and then three days along the coast of that water to a valley which they called Lemuel, watered by the river Laman (1 Nephi 2:8, 14).

When they were ready to continue their journey, they crossed the river and travelled four days south-southeast, to a place which they called Shazer (1 Nephi 16:13). Then they travelled for "many days," in the same direction, still following the coast of the Red Sea (1 Nephi 16:17). Their camping place here is not mentioned by name (1 Nephi 16:17). Again they travelled for "many days" to a place called Nahom. It was here that Ishmael died.

This may, possibly, have been in the vicinity of Medina, or Mekka. At any rate, here they changed their course to "nearly eastward" (1 Nephi 17:1), and continued in this direction for eight years, until they came to a place by the ocean, which they called Bountiful (1 Nephi 17:5).

Now, Nephi in his account of this extraordinary journey tells us that the travellers suffered "much affliction, hunger, thirst," as well as fatigue. He notes specially that they had to eat "raw meat," not being permitted to make "much fire." The Lord would make the food palatable, and He would also be their "light" (1 Nephi 17:2, 12, 13).

The obvious inference is that Lehi and his company were travelling through a hostile country, avoiding the common trade routes, and not betraying their whereabouts, not even by smoke from camp fires. Fire for sacrifices they probably had, according to the Mosaic law, but not fire for their own comfort. It is this detail of the Book of Mormon account of the sufferings of the colony of Lehi across the Arabian peninsula that receives a new illustration in the report of the French explorers concerning the hostility of the Arabs, even now.

But why this hostility at the time of Lehi?

That is an interesting story of its own.

According to the Old Testament accounts, the tribe of Simeon received its portion in the southern part of Palestine adjacent to the magnificent portion of Judah. The tribe, at the time of the entrance into Canaan, had been reduced from 59,300 able-bodied men at the time of the Exodus (Numbers 1:23), to 22,000 on reaching Canaan (Numbers 24:14). That, naturally, meant a corresponding loss of prestige. The cities and villages allotted to the tribe of Simeon, and occupied by that tribe until the time of David, are enumerated in 1 Chronicles 4:24-38. Afterwards, however, some of these cities are mentioned as belonging to Judah (1 Kings 19:3), wherefore there must have been a serious clash between the two tribes. Later, some of the Simeonites emigrated to a place called "Gedor," which is said to be on "the east side of the valley," while another part, 500 strong, went to Mount Seir, where they took possession of the land of the Amalekites. The tribe of Simeon was thus scattered over a wide area of the Arabian peninsula. It is stated that they increased greatly (1 Chronicles 4:38).

Some even are of the opinion that the chief and best features of the religion that bears the name of Mohammed were really originated by the Simeonites, who had left Palestine. They believe that it was some of the scattered members of this tribe who made Mekka a sacred place, in imitation of Jerusalem.

Be this as it may. But with this bit of history in mind, we can understand why Lehi could not travel openly, on the regular trade routes between India and Syria, or India and Egypt, and why they had to exercise the greatest precaution and shun the inhabited regions. A little band of Jews from Jerusalem would have been destroyed by the fugitive descendants of Simeon; that is, by Arabs who always have entertained feeling of resentment and contempt for the Jews. . . .

1936^ LDS Church

Book of Mormon Sunday School Lessons for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Published yearly by the Deseret Sunday School Union Board, printed at Salt Lake City, Utah, 1936

Lesson 9. Priesthood---In Ancient America

Prepared by Elder James E. Talmage and read over KSL, Sunday, August 6, 1933.

From Jerusalem to America

. . . Lehi and his people crossed the Pacific in the vessel they had built, and reached the western coast of America. (p. 98)

1936^ O. U. Bean, Class Instructor

Map: "Land of Zarahemla, Book of Mormon and How To Study It," Draughting by John Jongkindt, 1936.

This is a large map that was apparently used by O. U. Bean for illustration purposes in teaching. It represents a modified Hemispheric setting, however the southern part of South America is not shown and consequently the landing site of Lehi is not shown.]

[1936 Illustrated Model O. U. Bean HEMISPHERIC]

L.S. = South America (extent not exactly specified) / N.N. = Panama / L. N. = Panama north / H.C. = New York / Sidon = East & West Branch of Magdalena /

Progression of final battles: Land of Joshua = near Quiraguay / Land of Antum = near Copan / Hill Shim = near "Chichin-Itza" / Battleground of Agosh = near Mexico City / Waters of Ripliancum = Mississippi / Hill Cumorah = New York

Source: O. U. Bean, Class Instructor; Map: "Land of Zarahemla, Book of Mormon and How To Study It," Draughting by John Jongkindt, 1936.]

1937^ Josiah E. Hickman

The Romance of the Book of Mormon, Salt Lake City, Utah: The Deseret News Press, 1937

On page 62-63:

Hebrew Colonists Arrive in South America,-- About 600 B.C. Lehi, his wife, and four sons started on their trek from Jerusalem, guided by vision and dream through the dreary wilderness to the Red Sea, thence generally southward and south eastward to the 19th north latitude, thence eastward to the Indian Ocean. (See Richards and Little A Compendium, rev. ed., p. 271, Salt lake City, 1914)

. . . After years of hardships, on foot, through desolate paths, they came to a fruitful spot on the Indian Ocean (Sea of Irreantum), where they remained while they built their vessel for the long water voyage. . . .

1937^ J. A. Washburn

From Eden to Diahman: Chronology Chart, Provo, Utah, n.p., 1937

Note* In 1937 this booklet would be republished under the title From Eden to Diahman: Chronology

Chart and with dual authorship: Jesse A Washburn and J. Niles Washburn on the cover, but with only J. A. Washburn attributed to the Chronology Chart. It would not contain the separate maps as in the 1928 version. Rather a map of much reduced size would be inserted within the chronology chart. It is interesting, however that in this reduced-size map the Jaredites are now given two possible routes: one through the Mediterranean and across the Atlantic Ocean, and the other across Asia and the Pacific Ocean to Central America. The Nephites are illustrated as coming the Central America with no alternative option of going to South America. This is significant because it represents the Washburn's evolution in their analysis of the internal Book of Mormon geography.

[1937 Map: Possible and probable routes of Jaredites--Probable route of the Nephites. J. A. Washburn and J. N. Washburn, *From Eden to Diahman: Chronology Chart*, Provo, Utah, n.p., 1937]

[1937^ J. A. Washburn J. N. Washburn](#)

From Babel to Cumorah: A Story of the Book of Mormon, Provo, Utah: New Era Publishing Co., 1937. Second edition 1938

Introduction [VI-VII]

. . . From Babel to Cumorah in its first form was written early in the 1920's by J. A. Washburn, Principal of the Provo L. D. S. Seminary. During the years that have passed since then, it has undergone a number of changes and has come under a joint authorship.

The book is an attempt to bring together brief narratives of the Bible and Book of Mormon. . . .

Geography as presented herein is suggestive merely and is by no means intended to be definite. The subject is quite controversial. There are many opinions regarding it. All cannot be right, but most of them may be wrong. The subject is treated more extensively in another volume by the authors. The title of the new book is *The History and Geography of the Book of Mormon*. [Actually this "new book" would be published in 1939 under the title *An Approach to the Study of Book of Mormon Geography*] . . .

The authors acknowledge a debt of gratitude to all who have given their support in the preparation of this book. Special thanks are due to Mrs. Elsie C. Carroll, William T. Tew, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, A. S. Kienki, and E. Cecil McGavin for reading the manuscript and giving their encouragement. . . . --The authors, J. A. Washburn, J. N. Washburn

Danger Signals [pp. 50-51]

From Jerusalem they probably traveled east to the Jordan River and followed the coast of the Dead Sea through the land of the Moabites over the same route that Moses and the Israelites had taken so long before. Or they might have pursued a more direct course through the desert west of the Dead Sea. After three days they probably arrived at what is now the Gulf of Akaba, an arm of the Red Sea. Here they pitched their tents in a valley they called Lemuel . . .

It may be objected by some that the distance from Jerusalem to the Red Sea is too great for three days travel. Reference to a reliable map will show that it is about 200 miles. We have already observed that Father Lehi probably possessed a great deal of wealth in Jerusalem. It is not at all likely that he would have spared expense in making his preparations for departure. Since the camel is the fastest and most enduring of the far-eastern beasts of burden, it is possible that camels were used for this journey. Because of the heat in the land of Canaan travelers are often compelled to move early and late. Many even continue through the night. When we recall also that Lehi's enemies had threatened to kill him, we may be sure that he would have lost no time in putting distance behind him.

From Lemuel to Bountiful [pp. 67-69]

After gathering food and seeds they continued their journey, traveling in a southeasterly direction. Occasional stops were made along the way to permit the travelers to rest and secure food. Continually they were led by the Liahona into the most fertile parts of the wilderness by the Red Sea. Once when Nephi was out hunting, he broke his fine steel bow and returned to camp without food. . . . Nephi overcame the difficulty as he always did--with faith and works. He took a straight stick and made a bow with which he procured food. . . .

After travelling many more days in about the same direction they pitched their camp to rest again. Here Ishmael died and was buried. . . .

In the Wilderness [p. 70]

The journey was now nearly eastward to the seashore to a place called by the wanderers Bountiful. We cannot determine just where Bountiful was located. By referring to a good map of Arabia we shall find that the southeastern part is a great desert. I think they would not have crossed that. From a point further to the south they could have gone east to the Indian Ocean. Another possible route would have been eastward through the central part of Arabia to the Persian Gulf. (Sjodahl, *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*, pp. 408-22) . . . They were in the wilderness for eight years. That was a long time to traverse such a short distance. . . . [they] must have stopped frequently to rest for long periods and gather supplies. They could even have planted and reaped crops along the way . . .

Building the Ship [pp. 72-73]

With the help of his brothers, who had by now consented to aid him, Nephi chopped the timbers and fashioned them into a ship under instructions from God. The record does not say how much time was required for the undertaking, but eventually it was completed. It must have been a splendid craft, for even Laman and Lemuel were proud of it. . . . No description at all is given of Nephi's ship. Indeed, very few details are available of vessels earlier than the *Santa Maria*.

From Bountiful to the Promised Land [pp. 75-76]

Where did they land?

Many people have asked this question, and many are still asking it. No one can answer definitely and with certainty. I am sure they landed, but I do not know just where. As we have seen, we can follow them with some degree of assurance to the seashore in the Old World. From there their route is a matter of speculation. We shall need more light on the question. It may be that in the future we shall receive all the Nephite records, and at that time many of these perplexing problems will be settled for us.

The oldest view is that the Nephites set out into the Arabian Sea, or the Persian Gulf, and sailed through the Indian Ocean into the Pacific Ocean near the equator. This course has them bearing south and reaching land at some point in what is now Chile on the western coast of South America, at about thirty-two degrees south latitude.

A modification of this belief holds that they continued straight on eastward through the Pacific Ocean and landed somewhere between the two continents indicated on the map on page 17. The little arrows on the map point the direction of the ocean currents. Note that the great currents in the Pacific Ocean could have brought them to almost any point except the extremes on the western coast of the Americas. The Equatorial Counter Current moves eastward across the Pacific to Central America. This would have been a natural course.

"We did put forth into the sea," said Nephi, "and were driven forth by the wind toward the promised land." Inasmuch as the prevailing winds follow the general direction of the ocean currents, it is interesting and instructive to make a careful study of the possible routes.

Again, it is quite possible that the Nephites went westward around South Africa into the South Atlantic Current to the eastern coast of America, receiving help from the winds and currents most of the way.

[1938^](#) [George D. Pyper](#)

Statement of Book of Mormon Geography, appended to Frederick J. Pack, "Route Traveled by Lehi and His Company," *The Instructor*, Vol. 73, no. 4, April 1938, p. 160.

In the *Instructor* of 1938, following a reprinting of the 1890 statement by George Q. Cannon (see notation above), a letter is printed which is signed, "Frederick J. Pack, Chairman, Gospel Doctrine Committee." It concerns the statement in the 1882 Richards and Little Compendium supposedly revealing the route followed by Lehi. (see notation for 1882) Pack notes that the 1857 English edition of the Compendium lacked the Lehi statement, but American editions beginning with 1882 have included it. After quoting the Lehi's Travels statement he says the following:

This statement has gained wide acceptance throughout the Church, and has even been copied by various writers. Its authenticity, however, is subject to grave doubt, as witness the following: The only known source of authority is a single sheet of manuscript presented to the Church Historian's office, in 1864, by Ezra G. Williams, son of Frederick G. Williams, at one time counselor to Joseph Smith in the First Presidency. . . . it lays no claim to being a revelation, neither does it mention the name of the Prophet as its author. Thus the following caption, as it appears in the Compendium, "Lehi's Travels--Revelation to Joseph the Seer," is not present in the original manuscript.

In summary, the most that can be said with certainty of the manuscript statement is that it bears good evidence of having been written by the hand of Frederick G. Williams. He himself, however, gives no indication of the identity of its author; neither does he claim it to be of divine origin.

The Church has issued no information concerning the route followed by Lehi and his company. Until this is done, teachers of the Gospel Doctrine department should refrain from expressing definite opinions.

Frederick J. Pack
Chairman Gospel Doctrine Committee

(See the notation for 1882; see the B.H. Roberts comments of 1909)

Note* Immediately following the Pack letter is this note:

(Note. The present associate editor [George D. Pyper] of *The Instructor* was one day in the office of the late President Joseph F. Smith [who died in 1918] when some brethren were asking him to approve a map showing the exact landing place of Lehi and his company. President Smith declined to officially approve of the map, saying that the Lord had not yet revealed it, and that if it were officially approved and afterwards found to be in error, it would affect the faith of the people.--Asst. Editor)

[1938^](#) [LDS Church](#)

Book of Mormon Sunday School Lessons for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Published yearly by the Deseret Sunday School Union Board, printed at Salt Lake City, Utah, 1938

6. The Journey into the Wilderness

. . . They traveled in a southeasterly direction down what we now know as the Arabian peninsula, keeping close to the shores of the Red Sea. After many days (perhaps months) they changed their direction eastwardly, probably having done so when they reached the southern limits of Arabia. They continued in this direction until they arrived at a place of plenty near the sea shore which they called Bountiful. Here they established their camp. Eight years were consumed in making this journey. Before they had gone far into the wilderness Ishmael died and was buried. In Bountiful, Nephi obeyed instructions from the Lord by

building a ship onto which, at its completion, the small band embarked for the Land of Promise. After a turbulent trip they arrived in America--what part no one knows. . . . (p. 15)

Supplemental Material.

The interior of the Arabian Peninsula is mainly a hot desert. For that reason it became imperative that Lehi's course follow closely the shores of the Red Sea which undoubtedly provided fish for food. These shores and the country in the vicinity thereof furnished inviting hunting grounds for the small group of pilgrims. . . . (p. 16)

7. The Land of Promise

Supplemental Material.

The sea route followed by Lehi and his followers from southern Arabia to the shores of America is, of course, unknown. They were directed to their destination by the Power of God. They may have gone eastward around Southern India, by the East Indies and Australia, and across the Pacific to the western coast of South America. Possibly they were directed around the Cape of Good Hope at the southern extremities of Africa and then westward across the Atlantic to the eastern coast of South America. Their course could have taken them northward into Central America. Whatever might be said as to where they landed or the route they followed is merely guess work, for no information on the subject has been given to us. In any event the trip was a long one, and required that they go half way around the world to reach the land which God had prepared for this people.

Note* The above ideas on Lehi's oceanic travel route, while probably intended as a move toward open thought, are actually not very well thought out scripturally. The land of first inheritance was on the west of the Land of Nephi (Alma 22). If South America was where Lehi landed, and if they landed on the eastern coast, they would have had to traverse the continent from east to west in order to attain such a "land of first inheritance" on the west of the land of Nephi.

[1938^ Wells B Jakeman](#)

Geography of the Book of Mormon, Manuscript, Berkeley, California, No date (continually revised after 1938), pp. 28-29, 39.

According to V. Garth Norman, this unpublished manuscript dates to the late 1930's following Dr. Jakeman's Ph.D. studies at the University of California, Berkeley. While initially he had the narrow neck of land as the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, the land southward in southern Mesoamerica, and the land northward to include the hill Cumorah in New York, subsequent study resulted in Jakeman confining the land northward and the location of Cumorah to Mexico (following Ferguson's Two Cumorah's in 1947).

Jakeman writes the following information related to where Lehi's party might have landed on the American continent:

As far as the correct interpretation of the geography itself is concerned, no especial importance attaches to the exact point on the coast of the "land of promise" where the landing occurred. As was indicated in the introduction to our subject, and as will be demonstrated, there is a mass of evidence for a detailed reconstruction entirely independent of this factor. The evidence for its location will therefore be deferred to a later stage. Nevertheless, the actual place of landing is susceptible to almost exact determination. . . . By way of anticipation, it may be stated here that the landing occurred on the coast of the "west sea" in a region which was later called the "land of first inheritance" of the Lamanites. . . .

. . . It is thus probable, in the light of the above preliminary correlation, that the flight of Nephi and his followers, and their journey in the wilderness "of many days," took place from present western Guatemala

or northern San Salvador, the probable region of the first settlement of the colony, to some place in eastern Guatemala or northern Honduras, where the future city of Nephi was founded.

[1938^](#) [William E. Berrett](#), [Milton R. Hunter](#) [Roy A. Welker](#), [H. Alvah Fitzgerald](#)

A Guide to the Study of the Book of Mormon, Published by The Department of Education of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Deseret News Press, 1938

Acknowledgments: This course of study has been prepared at the request of Dr. Franklin L. West, Church Commissioner of Education. Grateful acknowledgment is here given to Dr. West and to Dr. M. Lynn Bennion for their kindly encouragement and timely criticisms. The committee is indebted to Joseph Fielding Smith and Charles A. Callis of the Council of Twelve, who offered many fine suggestions, and who carefully read and approved the entire manuscript. Appreciation is extended to Dr. Francis W. Kirkham, whose many suggestions enhanced the value of the text, and to all others who in any way assisted the committee.

(October, 1938, W.E. Berrett, M.R. Hunter, R.A. Welker, H.A. Fitzgerald)

Preface: Although the Book of Mormon has been in the Church from its beginning, more than a century ago, and has repeatedly constituted a course of study for various Church classes, there has been of late a growing feeling that many of its finest values have remained unappreciated. This has been largely true because no course of study has been written, specifically designed to bring out the contribution of the book to social and religious thought, especially on a level suitable for college and other advanced classes. This course of study is designed to supply in some measure the growing need for an advanced course in the Book of Mormon . . . there has been no attempt in this course of study to bring students to an appreciation of the Book of Mormon outside the book itself, but rather to lead them into the original book . . . (The Committee)

In Unit III, "External Evidences of the Book of Mormon, we find the following on pages 42-53:

Note 4: Geographical Considerations: (Part A). . . The book itself contains no map. It does not definitely locate on the American continents any land, hill, city, or river mentioned in its pages. Joseph Smith did not attempt a map and only a few isolated and fragmentary statements have come to us from early Church leaders on the subject. A difference of opinion exists as to whether these statements are conclusive evidences of geography or whether they represent only individual interpretations. (see George Q. Cannon, "Book of Mormon Geography," *Juvenile Instructor*, Jan 1. 1890, and April, 1938.) However, several maps on the subject have been made and published. Others will no doubt follow. They have been prepared after sincere and diligent study. With the same references in the volume from which to draw, these maps differ radically in area and location, in some cases to the extent of thousands of miles. Perhaps this is the best concrete evidence to prove how really limited and indefinite is the geographical evidence in the book.

None of these maps or theories of geography have been authorized or accepted by the Church up to the present time. They represent only the personal opinions of the authors. Present editions of the Book of Mormon contain no footnotes or references to geographical locations.

The first serious attempt to work out the geography of the Book of Mormon was made by George Reynolds. His two publications, "A Dictionary of the Book of Mormon" (1892) and "The Story of the Book of Mormon," outline his ideas as to where important Book of Mormon lands, rivers, cities and hills were located. Maps of the Americas which indicated these places were published and widely circulated. According to this theory, the most southern area mentioned in the record was near Valparaiso in Chili where the Lehi colony was supposed to have landed. The northern point was the Hill Cumorah in New

York. Consequently the intermediate territory would be known and occupied by these people. Several other well-known publications advocate this same general concept of area but differ greatly in the location of subdivisions. They include "Helps to the Study of the Book of Mormon," by Joel Ricks, and "An Introduction to the Story of the Book of Mormon," by J. M. Sjodahl.

Other investigators working independently have challenged the theories just described. They include Colonel Willard Young, Jesse A. Washburn and Dr. Wells Jakeman. In many respects their conclusions differ widely. A general tendency is noticeable, however, to greatly reduce the area actually occupied and mentioned in Book of Mormon history. Central America, therefore, becomes increasingly important in the total picture.

Pivotal points of discussion for these groups have been the landing places of the three colonies, the location of the narrow neck of land, and the site of the Hill Ramah or Cumorah which are mentioned in the Book of Mormon.

In the face of these conflicting opinions, the reader will recognize that careful personal investigations should precede his conclusions and that no one is justified in representing any one theory as the official explanation of the Church. In fact a decision on the subject is not necessary in order to obtain and enjoy the true spiritual values of the Book. Additional information which is sought and given in a spirit of service may help solve this puzzling problem.

(Part B) Note* This is a reprint from The Instructor, April, 1938 on Lehi's route and landing site as found in the Compendium of 1882 and its apparent uncertainty. (see the 1938 notation)

Note* It seems strange that such an unbiased and open approach to teaching Book of Mormon geography would be validated by Joseph Fielding Smith on the one hand, while at the same time his scathing denunciation of the two-Cumorah theory would be published in the Church News (see the September 1938 notation), not to mention Mark E. Petersen's 1953 Conference address (see notation) and the reprinting of Joseph Fielding Smith's 1938 article in the February 27th, 1954 Church News. It is also seems strange that this open approach to Book of Mormon geography did not seem to continue in the CES, as all further manuals alluded only to a New York hill Cumorah, and a hemispheric geographical setting.

[1939^](#) [C. Douglas Barnes](#)

"Lehi's Route to America," Improvement Era 42 (January 1939): p. 26-28, 49.

Douglas Barnes writes:

Concerning the migration of Lehi and his colony from Jerusalem, as disclosed in the Book of Mormon, Dr. James E. Talmage in The Articles of Faith, states:

The company journeyed somewhat east of south, keeping near the borders of the Red Sea; then changing their course to the eastward, crossed the peninsula of Arabia; and there, on the shores of the Arabian Sea, built and provisioned a vessel in which they committed themselves to Divine care upon the waters. Their voyage carried them eastward across the Indian Ocean, then over the South Pacific Ocean to the western coast of South America." (Page 271, 9th Edition) [265 (1st ed.; 259, Late ed.; see the Talmage notation for 1899].

By referring to the conventional terrestrial globe and tracing the path as outlined by Dr. Talmage, it is clear that the point of embarkation was somewhere on the southeastern extremity of the Arabian peninsula. In order to reach the Americas from this point, it required traversing in excess of 13,000 miles, or more than halfway around the world. While it is unlikely that we shall ever have sufficient information

to define precisely the path followed by that group in reaching America, pertinent data have been accumulated which are quite illuminating and which lead to at least a rough definition of the probable path followed in the migration under discussion.

The ocean journey of Lehi, depending as it did upon natural agencies, such as wind and currents, for propelling the craft, undoubtedly occupied many months. Although not claimed in the Book of Mormon account of the journey (1 Ne. 18), which is quite condensed, it is logical to assume that the colony stopped as occasion demanded or opportunity presented to provision the craft and to replenish the water supply. The memory of these stops, or contact with lands and possibly peoples en route, may have been perpetuated through the centuries in the traditions of descendants of the Lehi colony, and we turn for such evidence to the Hawaiians, who putatively are among the posterity of the Lehi group.

As regards the mechanics of this protracted journey, it has been found that ocean currents exist which in proper season move eastward from the Arabian peninsula toward India and even to Sumatra. By taking advantage of mergings into other existing ocean current systems, it is possible to outline an ocean route to the Americas. (see the map below) These points will now be amplified.

Quoting from *An Introduction to Oceanography*, by James Johnstone, D. Sc., Professor of Oceanography in the University of Liverpool:

North of the equator the streaming of the Indian Ocean is dominated by the monsoon wind systems. Figure 60 (the upper one) represents the winter conditions when the North-East Monsoon has been established, while the lower figure shows the streaming set up in the conditions of the South-West Monsoon which blows during the summer months. . . .

. . . As a rule the heating and cooling effect of the continental land masses is insufficient to do more than set up local modifications of the prevailing wind currents, but the Indian Ocean, in its relation to the great and high Asiatic continent is a striking exception. In the summer months the elevated lands become so strongly heated that a wind system lasting for some months is established, this is the South-west Monsoon. In the winter months the continental land is strongly cooled and then a reversed condition is set up: the North-east Monsoon is established and blows also for some months.

[1939 Illustration: Fig. 60. The Current Systems of the Indian Ocean. The upper figure represents the generalized conditions during the winter months and the lower figure shows the summer conditions in that part of the Ocean when the circulation reverses with the season. (Continuous lines represent warm currents and broken lines cold ones.) Reproduced in C. Douglas Barnes, "Lehi's Route to America," *Improvement Era* 42 (January 1939), p. 27.]

The Figure 60 referred to is reproduced for reference. It is quite evident from an inspection of the lower chart of the figure that in summer months ocean currents (south-west monsoon drift) move eastward from the Arabian shore, touch India, and move into the Bay of Bengal. In winter months the northeast monsoon drift (cf. upper chart Figure 60) would be less favorable for an easterly migration since the currents move toward the African rather than the Indian Coast. Continuing again it is clear from the lower chart that there is a movement of water southeast from the Bay of Bengal, between Sumatra and the Malay peninsula, and on into the South China Sea. Also other currents in the South China Sea move northward past Borneo. In addition there is an eastward movement through the archipelago north of Borneo and just south of the Philippines and into the Pacific Ocean. At this point, referring to Figure 59 reproduced from the same text, an ocean stream running counter-current to the north and south equatorial streams moves eastward in about the 50 north latitude, finally dividing and reversing itself just off the shores of Central and South America. Thus by a series of currents a path from Arabia to America has been outlined.

[1939 Illustration: Fig. 59. General Scheme of the Circulation in the Pacific Ocean. (Continuous lines represent warm currents and broken lines cold currents.) Reproduced in C. Douglas Barnes, "Lehi's Route to America," *Improvement Era* 42 (January 1939), p. 28.]

It is proposed by the author that the Lehi colony reached the Americas by means of the current combinations outlined above.

Provided the craft followed the natural ocean stream eastward across the Pacific Ocean, as described, it appears logical that the colony arrived at a point on the western shore of Central or South America, somewhere between the equator and 15o north latitude.

[1939 Illustrated Map Lehi's Route to America: Diagram Showing a Speculative Possibility]
Source: C. Douglas Barnes, "Lehi's Route to America," *Improvement Era* 42 (January 1939): p. 26.

[1939^](#) [J. N. Washburn](#)

An Approach to the Study of Book of Mormon Geography, Provo: New Era Publishing Co., 1939, pp. 86-91.

J. N. Washburn spent many years analyzing the text of the Book of Mormon in order to formulate the ideas that he put into his books. Although his analysis in this book was almost entirely internal, Washburn made some interesting cultural comments relative to Lehi's journey:

There were two possible routes of travel from Jerusalem. One was over the Jordan to the east and over the country of Moab through which the Israelites had entered Canaan so long before. Along this road from Jerusalem to the nearest point on the Gulf of Akaba, an arm of the Red Sea, is about 180 miles in our day.

The other route would have led the company almost due south of Jerusalem along the west side of the Dead Sea, a distance of approximately 150 miles today. In either case it was a considerable distance for three days of traveling and suggests that they might have used camels as their means of transportation. . .

The travelers camped in a valley they called Lemuel (2:14). . . . Before following the Nephites farther, it will be necessary to say a few words about the country through which they traveled for eight years.

Arabia is a vast expanse of arid territory lying between Egypt and Persia on the west and east and Canaan and the Indian Ocean on the north and south. It is a high plateau, sloping gently eastward from a mountain range that extends the whole length of it on the west side. This mountain range on the average is about twelve miles from the Red Sea from which it rises to an average height of five thousand feet.

The peninsula is divided naturally into three parts--the great inland center, sparsely dotted with oases and villages, the almost limitless expanse of shifting sands where few people can exist, and a narrow fringe of coastal plains. These plains are arid, but they are more or less thickly populated and in places are cultivated.

Owing to its aridity and southern latitude Arabia is one of the hot regions of the earth's surface. "The central desert tracts may be said to possess a healthy climate at all times of the year owing to the dryness of the atmosphere. It produces a feeling of invigoration where the wind is from the north . . . The same effect is experienced along the coastal fringe where an excessive humidity is coupled with a maximum summer temperature of ninety degrees on the Red Sea." (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 2, p. 196.)

At one time there was an abundance of wild game and fruits along the Red Sea. The Nephites on the whole perhaps experienced little difficulty in providing themselves with food while travelling through the country to Bountiful.

From Jerusalem to the southern coast of Arabia is about 1,500 miles. The Nephite colony required eight

years for the journey. They traveled an average of 188 miles a year or about one-half mile a day. Though nothing is said of it, they must have made long stops.

From the valley of Lemuel they traveled four days in a south-southeast direction and came to a place they called Shazer. (16:13) After resting for the replenishing of their food supply they took up the journey in the same direction for "many days." (v. 15) "Many days" is altogether indefinite though it appears that the expression actually means days and not longer periods of time.

From this point onward the journey was eastward. (17:1) "And," says Nephi, "we did come to the land which we called Bountiful, because of its much fruit and also wild honey . . . And we beheld the sea, which we called Irreantum, which, being interpreted, is many waters." (17:15) . . .

. . . At Bountiful, Nephi was commanded to build a ship for the voyage to the promised land. . . . There is not the slightest information as to the size or style of this ship. . . . It was very probably a sail ship, large enough to carry the people with sufficient provisions for the trip across the ocean. . . . According to the footnote to 1 Nephi 19:23 the group landed about 589 B.C. If such was the case, the entire journey from Jerusalem to the new world required eleven years. If we take out the eight spent in traveling in the old world, we discover that three years were required for building the ship and sailing it across to the promised land.

It is perhaps not important whether the ship was launched into the Persian gulf or the Indian Ocean. At the beginning the colonists would have gone into the same waters from either point.

They could have gone west around Africa and landed at any place on the eastern shores of the American continents. Steamships and sailing ships have for generations plied these waters with the aid of the winds and currents.

The Book of Mormon says nothing about directions or distances of the travels of the Nephite colony. We are left to form our own conclusions from the information available from other sources. There is no evidence that the travelers saw land along the way. . . . [1 Nephi 18.8 is quoted]

There is, however, conclusive evidence, to be presented later, that the Nephites landed on the western coast of the promised land. (Alma 22:28) They must, then, have sailed east. In this case our problem is not so easy as it was with the Jaredites who probably drifted west with the winds and currents.

In general, if the Nephites crossed the Pacific to the western coast of the new world, they would have gone counter to the prevailing winds and currents since, as has been shown already, the strongest winds move westward.

Along the heat equator the winds rise instead of blowing west as they do to the north and south. Since there is little or no wind here, this strip is known as the "equatorial calm belt," or the "belt flow pressure." Inasmuch as there is not any wind there to determine the direction of the current, the surface water follows the pull of the earth and deeper water. The result is that at the equator, between the trade wind zones, a current runs counter to the North and South Equatorial Currents. It is known as the Equatorial Counter Current. In the Pacific it strikes the western coast of Central America.

The Nephites might have crossed with this current in which case they could have landed in Central America. For that matter, they could have come with other currents and have landed in Central America. There is very good reason to believe that they did land there. The evidence for this view will be presented in proper order.

All early writers and most recent ones held to the view that the Nephites landed in South America, far down the western coast, at about thirty to thirty-two degrees south latitude. This view was given currency by the publication in the Richards and Little Compendium of a purported revelation of the Prophet Joseph's that established that location as the landing place. As there is some reason to doubt that the statement in question is a revelation, this idea of the landing place of the Nephites is giving way before readers of the record of ancient America.

To mention only one thing, many readers now find it increasingly difficult to harmonize with the Book of Mormon the traditional belief that the Nephites moved from southern South America to northern United

States. The present writers are among those who are inclined to be skeptical, and their growing skepticism was one of the moving causes of this study covering many years.

Nevertheless, this matter of a South American landing may not so easily be disposed of. The origin of the statement is shrouded in some obscurity. Surely no Latter-day Saint will question a definite statement from the Prophet Joseph, much less a revelation.

[1939 Map: Possible Journeys of Book of Mormon Peoples. J. N. Washburn, *An Approach to the Study of Book of Mormon Geography*, Provo: New Era Publishing Co., 1939, p. 91]

[1940^](#) [Joel Ricks](#)

Book of Mormon Geography, (Manuscript) Logan, Utah, 1940, pp. 3, 28-32. See also The Geography of The Book of Mormon, abt. 1940

Joel Ricks writes:

My purpose in writing this story is twofold: 1st--To emphasize the geographic references in the record, and 2nd--To identify these locations in the light of modern geography.

Our first important need is to find a point mentioned in the record which we can identify today. Fortunately Joseph Smith has given us two such points: First, the point where Lehi landed, and second, the place of the final battle, Cumorah.

Both of these locations are now disputed, but if the reader will follow closely the text of the book he will find other evidences to confirm this conclusion . . . (p. 3)

. . . the Nephites came from Jerusalem 600 B.C. Their route from Jerusalem, was first southward to the Red sea. Thence along its eastern shore to the 19 degree north latitude, thence eastward to the sea of Arabia, thence they sailed in a southeast direction and landed on the west coast of South America 30 degrees south latitude. . . . (p. 26)

The following story was written as a criticism of Dr. Barnes' article in the January "Era" and "Instructor" (1939).

I read with interest the article in the January "Era" written by Dr. Barnes on the above subject, in which he makes Nephi navigate his ship for about two thousand miles through the great East Indian Archipelago with its narrow passages, its coral reefs, and its thousand islands. It must have kept Nephi pretty busy, besides all of those islands were densely inhabited by a bold seafaring lot of pirates who made things interesting for any one who dared to venture into their realm; then I think such an occurrence would have been of sufficient importance for Nephi to have mentioned it in the record. My main objection, however, is to the point where he lands them on the coast of Central America, some distance north of the narrow neck which connects the two great regions, North and South America. While the Book of Mormon says very clearly that they landed south of the narrow neck.

I realize that some folks claim that there are several places between Mexico and South America, which might have been the narrow place so often mentioned in the record. There is Tehuantepec, about 150 miles across, the Isthmus of Honduras, 130 miles across, but both of these run east and west. . . . I have been on the Isthmus of Honduras, and seen the rough mountains lying between the seas, and I judge a man would have a hard time to cross it in a week.

Every reader of the Book of Mormon must have noted that the region occupied by both the Jaredites and Nephites, is described as two great regions connected by a narrow neck of land, the region north of the neck was known as Land Northward, and the region south of the neck was known as Land Southward. Any school boy would recognize this picture as the American continent. The angel Moroni told Joseph Smith that the record contained a history of the former inhabitants of this continent, and this continent embraces all of America from the Arctic Ocean to Cape Horn.

Nephi saw the land of Promise in vision; he saw the entire history of his people upon the land. . . . Now then, what picture do you suppose Nephi saw? Did he see the American continent as it really is, the true picture or did he see just a part of the continent? He saw the picture as of the year 1492 when Columbus came, and describes the conditions then prevailing in both North and South America. We know now that the entire region north and south, was occupied at that time by one common race of Red men, with similar characteristics, habits, customs and language. Is it not reasonable to suppose that he saw the true picture, two great regions connected by a narrow neck, if so; then South America becomes the land Southward of the Book of Mormon, and North America becomes the land Northward. That is the true picture. This puts an end to all controversy as to the route taken by Lehi and his place of landing. The Book of Mormon plainly says that the Lord brought Lehi into the land south, and Mulek into the land north. The point of landing is plainly indicated in Alma 22:28 as way down on the west coast of the land southward.

If further evidence of this conclusion is needed, let us consider the revelation to Joseph Smith, published in the Old Compendium, which reads as follows, "The course that Lehi and his company travelled from Jerusalem to the place of their destination: They travelled nearly a southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude; then nearly east to the Sea of Arabia, then sailed in a south-east direction and landed on the continent of South America, in Chill, thirty degrees south latitude."

The Book of Mormon confirms this statement as far as the Arabian Sea, "They journeyed along the eastern side of the Red Sea in nearly a south, southeast direction to the place Nahom, where Ishmael died, then nearly eastward until they came to the great sea." (1 Nephi 16:13, 17:1)

The revelation gives us the exact spot where they turned eastward, the nineteenth degree north, and the exact spot where they landed, 30 degrees south latitude. To a geographer this information is of great value, and should enable him to fix definitely the location of the lands they occupied from the landing place to Cumorah. But its authenticity is questioned by some students who have built up theories which conflict with the idea expressed above, consequently they want to cast a doubt on the revelation.

Let us investigate the facts concerning that Revelation. The Prophet was dictating a revelation to his scribe, Frederick G. Williams, who wrote it down in long hand, on a sheet of old time foolscap paper. The latter part of the revelation covered about two thirds of the sheet, leaving a blank space of four or five inches at the bottom of the sheet. On that blank space is the words of the revelation quoted above, just as though it had come as a separate item from the lips of the Prophet. If it was not a revelation, not dictated by the Prophet, then we have the alternative that Williams wrote it, that the trusted scribe was a crook, that the Prophet knew nothing of the item, nor did anyone else, for the sheet seems to have been mislaid and forgotten for about thirty years, when it was found by one of Mr. Williams sons who recognized its value and took it to the Historians office. This was about 1864. The church authorities accepted it as genuine and it was published in the old Compendium.

For more than fifty years its authenticity was not questioned. About 1838 Orson Pratt wrote a pamphlet entitled "Remarkable Visions," which has gone through half a dozen or more editions and has been accepted by the Church for ninety years or more. Speaking of Lehi's journeyings he says, "they were first led to the eastern borders of the Red Sea; then they journeyed for some time along the borders thereof, nearly in a southeast direction; after which they altered their course nearly eastward, until they came to the great waters, where by the command of God, they built a vessel in which they were safely brought across the great Pacific Ocean, and landed on the western coast of South America." About September 1842 John Taylor was editor of the "Times and Seasons," in Nauvoo and published an article entitled "Zarahemla," in which he says that Lehi landed on the west coast of South America. Both Pratt and Taylor were very close to the Prophet, and were the only men that I know of who wrote of these things during the Prophets life time. From whom do you suppose they got this idea, if not from the Prophet himself, who also would they accept? If the Prophet dictated that item he knew of it even though the original had disappeared. That there was common knowledge of it among the general authorities is evidenced by the fact that they were willing to accept the copy when it was found.

By this route Nephi's ship would be driven south down the Indian Ocean by the Monsoon winds, where it would be swept eastward by the great south Pacific current and landed at thirty degrees south where that current strikes the coast of Chili. All sailing vessels from Africa to Australia and South America take advantage of those currents today. From this evidence we feel convinced that the revelation is genuine, that we do not believe Frederick g. Williams was a crook. But we do believe that Orson Pratt and John Taylor got their information from Joseph Smith and that information is confirmed in the Book of Mormon.

(see the Ricks notation for 1904)

[1940 Map: Lehi's Route through Arabia. Joel Ricks, *Book of Mormon Geography, Manuscript, Logan, Utah, 1940*]

[1940 Map of the Land Southward: Lehi's Landing Site. Joel Ricks, *Book of Mormon Geography, Manuscript, Logan, Utah, 1940*]

[1940^ Lynn C. & H. J. Layton](#)

"Book of Mormon Lands," (Paper) n.d.

In this 5-page manuscript, the Laytons write the following: "Many years of study on the geography of the land of the Nephites has brought conviction that the early Maya nation was the same as the Nephite nation." They go on to bolster this idea with some quotes from the Times and Seasons (Sept. 15, 1842) and some arguments backed by a few historical and scholarly writings. At the end of the article they include a map (see below) in which Book of Mormon lands are located in Mesoamerica. They have the "Land of First Inheritance" marked along the Pacific coastline of southeastern Guatemala and El Salvador. This would presumably place Lehi's landing site towards the southeastern extremity of that land in El Salvador or perhaps on the western edge of the Bay of Fonseca.

[1940 Map of Book of Mormon Lands. Drawn by Lynn C. & H. J. Layton. Lynn C. & H. J. Layton, *"Book of Mormon Lands," (Paper) n.d.*]

[1940^ RLDS Church](#)

Whence Came the Red Man? Independence, MO: Herald House, 1940.

A 13-page pamphlet that describes the provenance of the Indians:

The Indians are of the Chosen Seed of Israel. . . . Long centuries ago, many generations before the white man discovered the shores of America, god led a good man named Lehi, and his four sons and their families, out and away from the great and wicked city of Jerusalem. . . . [they] traveled many days by land through the wilderness and at length came to the shores of many waters. Here God told them how to build a ship . . . When this wonderful boat was completed, Lehi and his four sons and their families started out, and for many days the Great Spirit caused a wind to blow over the waters and this wind carried the ship steadily forward until the shores of America were reached. The part of America which they first saw

was an uninhabited land and no man was present in this wild.

Note* The sterile views above, when measured against the scholarly investigations of the 1894 Committee on Geography of the Book of Mormon, makes one wonder what is going on within the hierarchy of the RLDS Church. BUT SEE THE ARTICLE BELOW

[1941^](#) [Charles B. & Sylvia McKeage](#)

An Introductory Study of the Book of Mormon, Vol. 16, No. 1, MO: Herald House, 1941, [Reprint] 1945, [R] 1949.

This booklet, published as Gospel Quarterly 16 (October-December 1941): 2-72, " contains a series of thirteen lessons on topics that deal with the Book of Mormon, prepared for adults of the RLDS church. In "Lesson Five: The Journey Across Land and Sea," we find the following:

The Departure [p. 25]

By commandment Lehi and his family left Jerusalem and came down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea, then travelling three more days in the wilderness, they pitched their tent in a valley by the side of a river of water which emptied into the Red Sea. . . .

The Journey [pp. 26-27]

They traveled nearly a south, south-east direction for four days, and pitched their tents again, in a place they called Shazer. After hunting for food they traveled on again, following in the same direction, keeping in the most fertile parts of the wilderness, which was in the borders near the Red Sea. They traveled for many days, slaying their food by the way, until it was necessary for them to obtain rest. At this place Nephi broke his bow. . . .

From this place they took their journey again, and traveled many days in nearly the same course as in the beginning. They made another stop at a place called Nahom. Here Ishmael's death caused sorrow. . . . From this place they changed their course and traveled nearly eastward across the great Arabian desert until they reached the sea shore (1 Nephi 5:16-67) . . .

Another Great Journey [pp. 28-29]

"And it came to pass after we had all gone down into the ship, and had taken with us our provisions and things which had been commanded us, we did put forth into the sea, and were driven forth before the wind, towards the promised land."--1 Nephi 5:180, 181 . . .

". . . and it came to pass that after we had sailed for the space of many days, we did arrive to the promised land" (verses 209-212)

The memory of this long journey still lingers in the legends and traditions of the American Indians: "At last Tulan, the mysterious land of the 'seven caves' was forsaken, and under the leadership of Tohil the people began a migration which was attended with indescribable hardships and famine itself. Their way led through dense forest, over high mountains, a long sea passage, and by a rough and pebbly shore. We are told, however, that the sea was parted for their passage. Their tribulations were at an end when at last they arrived at a beautiful mountain, which they named after their God, Hacavitz. Here they were informed that the sun would appear, and, as a consequence, the four progenitors of the race and all the people rejoiced. Here was everything bounteous and gladdening."--"North Americans of Antiquity," by Short, page 215. . . .

"An Okanagan myth relates that they were descended from a white couple who had been sent adrift from an island in the Eastern Ocean." The Chipewyans have a tradition that they came from a distant land, where a bad people lived." "The Algonquins preserved a tradition of a foreign origin and a sea voyage." "The Olmec traditions relate that they came by the sea from the east."--Native Races," by Bancroft, volume 5, page 22.

Thus we see that the traditions clearly indicate, first, a foreign origin; second, long wanderings before the destined home was reached; third, that the first starting point was across the sea.

Note* If Lehi traveled according to the above quoted legends, then he would have come "from the east," or "from an island in the Eastern Ocean." This could be interpreted to mean, in the context of this lesson material, that Lehi came across the Atlantic Ocean, although nothing is specifically said here.

[1943^](#) [Inez Kinney](#)

"Book of Mormon Geography: An Answer to the Central American Landing Contention," in Saints Herald 909 (15 May 1943): pp 620-623.

In opposition to those proposing a Central American setting for the Book of Mormon (especially Louis Hills), Inez Kinney argues that legends and evidences point to the fact that Lehi's colony landed in South America. In the beginning of the article the following note appears:

The whole question of Book of Mormon geography as applied to the Americas has been a troubled one. The different views have been published, and every publication has brought objections from students who hold contrary opinions. The author of these notes has had greater opportunity for travel and study than most persons. She knows the Spanish language, and is able to read its publications and talk to the people. She has made trips to Mexico, Central America, and South America. She has read many books on archaeology. Although we have had to be careful in accepting articles for publication in this highly controversial field, it would seem to us most unfortunate to miss an opportunity to publish her notes on the subject. And she presents them simply as notes. She has had neither time nor strength to put them in literary shape; and there are limits to what editors can do. . . . Editors.

Kinney writes:

Relative to the landing of the Nephites from the West, according to the Quiche tradition found in the Popol Vuh, neither the place of landing nor the location of Tulan Zuiva are mentioned as to country. Merely inserting a name in brackets does not inspire confidence or bridge gaps. The "west" or "to where the sun sets, we came from the other side of the sea," could as well or better apply to a landing in South America, and the city of Nephi could be one or more city ruins answering the requirements. The temple, the walls and more significant, the fortifications mentioned in the Book of Mormon (page 192:41) and the scientific estimate of its age are all features which may be identified and verified in Peru. [The claim] "I am convinced the ruins of Zacualpa in Salvador, Central America, are the ruins of Xibalba," (from L. E. Hills) does not show the evidence necessary to sustain this contention.

Joice, in Mexican Archaeology (page 369) relates a legend in Peru, which says that colonists came from the west in boats.

McGovern, Jungle Paths and Inca Ruins, (page 457). Legend of the Four Brothers: each with a spouse . . . tribes moved northward. Youngest brother became leader . . . settled in the fertile valley of Cuzco." Again: "out of certain caves . . . appeared two tribes." Caves are believed to be merely symbolical.

On Lehi's travels, Kinney writes:

They came from Jerusalem, traveled south down to the Red Sea; then went eastward and crossed the

Euphrates at the head of the Persian Gulf; thence eastward to the Himalayan Mountains, and on to the rivers that headed into the mountains in the south of China, and thence down the rivers until they came to the coast of the ocean.

Here they pitched their tents and called the place Bountiful - because of there being much fruit and wild honey; here they built their ship. . . .From Jerusalem to the coast of Arabia on the Indian Ocean would take about one year to make the trip, so that the time would be too short to raise children while living on raw meat. So they must have a longer distance in which to accomplish the task. The course as outlined would take about four years, giving plenty of time to raise the children.

[1944^ Ariel L. Crowley](#)

"Lehi's River Laman," *The Improvement Era*, January 1944, pp. 14-15, 56-61.

Ariel Crowley writes:

Lehi fled with his family as directed, and presently emerged upon a height overlooking a well-defined valley in which a great river ran steadfastly into the fountain of the Red Sea. (1 Nephi 2:9)

There are no rivers which run into the Red Sea (University Encyclopedia, vol. 7, p. 500.) Identification of the stream upon which Lehi pitched his tent becomes, therefore, a problem of the first magnitude, which may, dependent upon its solution, constitute a strong evidence for or against the truth of the Book of Mormon account.

The problem so presented has been unnecessarily complicated by the notion that Lehi traveled but three days from Jerusalem to the Red Sea. That notion, which has arisen from an uncritical reading of 1 Nephi 2:6, is without justification in the text. In point of feasibility, it being more than one hundred seventy-five miles by air line, passage through the wilderness of 600 B.C. from Jerusalem to the Red Sea in three days appears improbable. Even the explanation of possible use of racing camels (Washburn, Book of Mormon Geography, 1939, p. 86) is strained and not required by Nephi's language.

In explaining his solution to this dilemma, Crowley notes that the terms "wilderness," "borders near the shore of the Red Sea" and "borders which are nearer the Red Sea" are significant to Lehi's direction of travel. Initial aid is found in the words describing Lehi's departure. The word "wilderness" stands out. In every passage describing the Lehite trip the word "wilderness" is reiterated. And in the first instance it is written, "He departed into the wilderness."

In ancient times there were two routes to Egypt, one known as "The Way of the Land of the Philistines," and the other was the "Wilderness Way." Dr. H. Guthe has described them as follows:

. . . The "way of the wilderness of the Red Sea" led through the Wadi Tumilat past Pithom to the region of the Bitter Lakes and the wilderness of Shur . . .

Lehi's departure "into the wilderness" may, then, for the sake of the hypothesis, be taken as a statement that he left by the Wilderness Way, and came down by the Red Sea in the neighborhood of the Wadi Tumilat, in the region of the Great Bitter Lake. The problem is then to determine whether or not there is any evidence that there was in fact a fresh-water stream at the tip of the Gulf of Suez in the time of Pharaoh-Neco (Necho), c. 600 B.C.

Crowley points to the Great Bitter Lake at the tip of the Suez gulf as the "fountain" and believes that the River Laman which emptied into it may have been the ancient river canal of Pharaoh Necho that was begun around 610 B.C. This man-made river flowed from the Nile to the Great bitter Lake and "thence by natural shallows enough for light boats" into the Red Sea. (see map below) It also exhibited distinct levels back from the sea bed as described by Dr. W. M. Flinders Petrie, in his account of the Serabit Expedition of

1905 embodied in his Researches in Sinai. This would explain the "borders near the shore of the Red Sea" and "borders which are nearer the Red Sea"

[1944 Map: Lehi's Travel Route. Ariel L. Crowley, "Lehi's River Laman," *The Improvement Era*, January 1944, p. 14.]

Note* Ariel Crowley's view was referred to by Eldin Ricks in his *Book of Mormon Commentary*, vol. 1, SLC: Deseret News Press, 1951, pp. 44-45. It was rebutted by Hugh Nibley in his 1952 *Lehi in the Desert*, pp. 93-95--see notation.

Note* This article would appear in a 1961 book by Ariel Crowley--see the 1961 notation.

[1944^](#) [Leon C. Dalton](#)

"Routes To The Promised Land," in *Liahona, The Elders Journal*, August 8, 1944, pp. 101-103.

This paper is "A study of the routes taken by the Book of Mormon people in the light of the two elements that made their journeys possible--Wind and Water Currents." Leon Dalton writes:

The course taken by the Nephites is also open to some question, but in this matter we have something more definite to start with. Their point of embarkation is given as the shore of the Red Sea, while Joseph Smith has indicated their landing was on the western shore of South America at about latitude 30 degrees South. In spite of these two definite statements, some persist in "bringing" them across the Pacific Ocean near the equator, in the very face of the Trade winds which blow from northeast to southwest north of the equator, and from southeast to northwest south of the equator, except during our summer months, when they blow mostly from the east. True, there are short periods during which an eastward drift might be found, but perusal of any modern Pilot Chart of the Pacific Ocean will indicate that even sailing ships with capable crews and full spreads of canvas do not follow a course that permits any acceptable journey from the Indian Ocean to North America. Then, too, the Nephite record tells of a time when they were becalmed for several days while their leader languished in bonds, shortly after they sailed, the winds freshening after his release.

The normal wind movement is northward into the Indian Ocean, which includes the Arabian Sea, during the summer months, and in the opposite direction in winter, generally with periods of calm in between. Had they sailed in the early summer, they certainly could have made no progress against the summer winds, so we must assume they sailed in the early autumn. Thus, they could very easily have gone through the period of calm referred to, followed by favorable winds. Here again, so many people think too much in terms of the northern hemisphere, and course the Nephites directly eastward. Just why they should be required to maneuver through the Dutch East Indies and through the waters of Eastern Asia across an hostile ocean, is uncertain. Such a course would take them northward to Alaska, down the Western shores of North America to Mexico, and then, to reach the point Joseph Smith tells they landed, they would have to FLOAT against adverse wind and water currents over 3000 miles.

An examination of the pilot charts of the world reveals that if the Nephites embarked in late summer, after the harvest, they would have two or three months of northerly winds (winds out of the north) or about 100 days, and if they floated at the normal rate of from 3 to 5 miles per hour, they would reach a south latitude of about 40 degrees in that length of time, or slightly south of the line connecting Cape Town, South Africa and Melbourne, Australia. Here they would encounter the . . . 'Prevailing Westerlies,' (winds blowing west to east) as they would here enter the ocean currents that travel eastward around the globe the year around. These currents continue their eastward course until they encounter 56 degrees

south latitude, where they split. Those south of 56 degrees continue on around the earth, while those striking the Chilean coast are deflected northward along the shoreline, turning seaward again at about 35 degrees south latitude during the warm months, but continuing northward to about 20 degrees during the winter. Thus, in any season, there is an ocean current from a region as far away as the South Indian Ocean leading directly to the central Chilean Coast, where Joseph Smith stated the Nephites landed. We have further shown that there are normal winds and water currents that lead from the Red Sea southward to the eastbound currents, so that, even if the Prophet Joseph had not identified the point of landing, research into modern ocean charts leaves that course as the only logical one.

No attempt has been made to establish the error of any other writers conclusions, as it is conceded, that factors not herein considered might have reacted to bring . . . Nephite[s] hence by any other route. The present paper is prepared solely upon the premise of modern Pilot Charts of the oceans as prepared by the United States Hydrologic Service, and the arguments are based upon these findings. Since the routes are herein presented are the most logical from the standpoint of the natural elements by which our travelers reached our shores, they are presented as the most probable routes followed. Those people were human beings, as are we, and not Supermen capable of overcoming the unconquerable, or accomplishing the impossible. . . .

[NOTE* HAVE SOMEBODY MAP THIS MATERIAL OUT]

1945^ A. Hamer Reiser

The History of the Church for Children. Salt Lake City, Utah: The Deseret News Press. First Printing, 1941. Second printing, 1943. Third (revised) printing, 1945. Copyright for the Deseret Sunday School Union 1945. Course of Study for the First Intermediate Department for the Sunday Schools of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

On page 10 we find the following:

"The new land to which Lehi brought his family was America. These pioneers from Jerusalem landed in South America."

Note* This book would be used multiple times by the Sunday School Board in its manuals: 1948, 1950, 1952, 1954, 1956, 1958.

[1946 Illustrated Model M. Wells Jakeman LIMITED MESOAMERICA]

L.S.=Honduras & El Salvador / N.N.=Isth. of Tehuan. / L.N.=N. of Tehuan. to Valley of Mexico / H.C.=Valley of Mexico / Sid. R.=Usumacinta

Sources: M. Wells Jakeman, "The Book of Mormon Civilizations: their Origin, and Their Development in Space and Time," in Progress in Archaeology: An Anthology, comp. and ed. Ross T. Christensen, pp. 81-88; see University Archaeological Society Special Publication no. 4, Provo; see also Discovering the Past, Provo:BYU, 1954, pp. 81-84 (Summarized in Paul R. Cheesman, These Ancient Americans, SLC: Deseret Book, 1974, pp. 164-166. See also Ross T. Christensen, "The River of Nephi: An Archaeological Commentary on an Old Diary Entry," in Newsletter and Proceedings of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology 158 (December 1984), pp. 1-8, who discusses a statement attributed to Joseph Smith (1844) equating "the river of Copan" with "the river of Nephi." Christensen notes that this agrees well with Jakeman's placement of the city of Nephi on a classroom map which the latter prepared and used at BYU in the

1950's.

Note* The Jakeman map has Lehi landing in []

[1947^ Wesley Ziegler](#)

An Analysis of The Book of Mormon, Pasadena, California: Publication Press, 1947, pp. 10-12

Somewhat alarmed, they [Lehi's family] moved hastily into the wilderness bordering the Red Sea. . . . The group pressed on until they reached "many waters," probably the Indian Ocean. . . . [Nephi] knew nothing about shipbuilding and they had no idea what distance they must sail to cross these waters or what they would find if they did. . . . With their concerted efforts they managed to finish the structure and it was seaworthy. So the colony boarded the craft and floated out to sea. . . . They were adrift a great length of time. . . . Eventually they reached what they called "an island of the sea." . . . Throughout the entire Book of Mormon, descendants of Lehi and Ishmael never realized where they were. They seemed to have no conception of eastern and western hemispheres as understood today. Book of Mormon scholars are agreed, however, that they apparently landed in South America, probably on the coast of what is now Chile.

[1947^ Paul M. Hanson](#)

Jesus Christ Among the Ancient Americans, Independence, MO, 1947

On page 149-150 Paul Hanson writes:

Respecting the landing places of these colonies in the New World, reasoning from the details given in the Book of Mormon bearing on their migration, such as their places of departure, travels, direction followed, topography of the country in which they settled, and taking into consideration ocean currents and trade winds, it is generally assumed by students of Book of Mormon geography that the Jaredites and the third colony landed on the eastern shore of Central America, and the Nephites in the southern part of the western coast of Central America, or on the coast of South America, in northern Chile. Those holding that the Nephites landed on the west coast of South America believe they were founders of the civilization in the highlands of the Andes, later pushing into what is now Central America.

[1947^ E. L. Whitehead](#)

The House of Israel, Independence, Missouri: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1947, pp. 147-149.

In his book on the various dispersions of the House of Israel, E. L. Whitehead writes:

The history of the Nephites, the branch of Israel placed in a "goodly land by the side of great waters," is very well established because of the history of the nation preserved in the Book of Mormon.

At this point it is interesting to check the record of the Nephites with the facts yielded by the study of the ancient cities of the American continents.

The first permanent city established by the Nephites was the City of Nephi. The earliest city of South America is located in the same area described by Nephi, and is known as the city of Cuzco of the Incas. It was established, according to their legends by the divine guidance given their ancestors by a golden rod which sank into the earth when the place of settlement was reached. The earliest history of the Incas dates back to the mythological "four Ayar brothers" who led their people from "Paccari-Tampu" (House of the Dawn). Each of the brothers was designated as an Ayar (chief, or patriarch), . . .

The four Ayar brothers had four wives who were sisters. The designation given to the Inca of "god on earth" dates back to the earliest history of these four brothers and their four sister wives. At that time they were declared to be holy people, "descendants of the Sun."

There is a very remarkable resemblance in this legend of the Incas to the Book of Mormon record. Nephi records that the early migrants to this country were composed of two families, Lehi's and Ishmael's. In Lehi's family were four sons, Laman, Lemuel, Nephi, and Sam. They married the four daughters of Ishmael shortly after departing from Jerusalem. They were the first settlers of the area later occupied by the Inca nation, having landed on the west coast of South America just a short distance to the southwest of the city of Cuzco. . . .

The resemblance of the Inca legend to the Book of Mormon account is very striking and can be summarized as follows:

Four Ayar brothers--four sons of Lehi.

Four sister wives--four of Ishmael.

Paccari-tampu--Jerusalem.

Fetish--movable spindle in the ball, or Liahona.

Golden rod--brass ball. . . .

Cuzco, original home of the Incas where the golden rod sank into the earth--City of Nephi, "many days," distance from the original landing place in South America, and the first permanent Nephite city in this land. . . .

The point of arrival in South America of the first migrants to America is also well established by certain archaeologists, and corresponds with the place revealed by Joseph Smith as the 32 degree south latitude, just below the hump on the western shores of South America. Mr. G. Elliot Smith, noted authority on early American migrations, in his book "The Migrations of Early Culture," establishes the point of landing of the first migrants to South America but a few miles from the point revealed by Joseph Smith. . . .

Archaeologists are generally agreed that the first civilization in South America was established somewhere in the area of Lake Titicaca in Bolivia, and call it the "Tiahuanaco period." Its center is about 350 miles from the point established by Mr. G. Elliot Smith as the landing place, and about 400 miles from the point established by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Because of the rugged condition of the Andean country the journey to the first Nephite city would require "many days" for it is situated about 13,000 feet above sea level.

[1947^ Leland H. Monson](#)

Life in Ancient America: A Study of the Book of Mormon. Advanced Senior Department Course of Study for the Sunday Schools of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints., Published by the Deseret Sunday School Union, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1947.

Chapter 45

Mormon

In the Preface it notes that the "bibliographical suggestions will provide additional enrichment materials which will help the teacher to understand significant doctrines and problems treated in the lessons." In Chapter 8, "To the Land of Promise" (pp. 19-20) we find the following:

Teaching Suggestions: Students will remember the narrative material best if the teacher will emphasize place. . . . Trace the journey to the land of promise on a good map. . . . Use material in the bibliographical references. . . .

Enrichment Material: "In the library connected with the office of the Church Historian, Salt Lake City, there is a sheet of paper on which the statement is written that the landing was in 30 degrees south. That would be in Chile, about where the city of Coquimbo now is situated. The statement is in the handwriting of Frederick G. Williams, at one time counselor to the Prophet, and it is found on a sheet on which a revelation, Sec. 7 in the Doctrine and Covenants, also has been copied. That revelation was given in the year 1829. The presumption, therefore, is that the lines relating to the landing of Lehi were also penned at an early date, and certainly before the year 1837, when Frederick G. Williams was removed from his position as counselor. If this is correct, the statement of Williams would undoubtedly reflect the views of the Prophet Joseph on that question."--J. M. Sjodahl, *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 92.

Enrichment Material:

Regarding the article quoted, *The Improvement Era* writes:

Many Book of Mormon scholars will disagree with the point of view herein set forth, and it is presented here not as the view of the Church, but as the speculation, opinion, and possible conclusion of one thoughtful student of the subject, and is submitted for what value it has as a creator of interest and stimulator of thought in these channels.

Concerning the migration of Lehi and his colony from Jerusalem, as disclosed in the Book of Mormon, Dr. James E. Talmage in *The Articles of Faith*, states:

It appears that the company journeyed somewhat east of south, keeping near the borders of the Red Sea; then, changing their course to the eastward, crossed the peninsula of Arabia; and there, on the shores of the Arabian Sea, built and provisioned a vessel in which they committed themselves to divine care upon the waters. It is believed that their voyage must have carried them eastward across the Indian Ocean, then over the Pacific Ocean to the western coast of America. (Chapter 14)

By referring to the conventional terrestrial globe and tracing the path as outlined by Dr. Talmage, it is clear that the point of embarkation was somewhere on the southeastern extremity of the Arabian peninsula. In order to reach the Americas from this point, it required traversing in excess of 13,000 miles, or more than halfway around the world. While it is unlikely that we shall ever have sufficient information to define precisely the path followed by that group in reaching America, pertinent data have been accumulated which are quite illuminating and which lead to at least a rough definition of the probable path followed in the migration under discussion.--C. Douglas Barnes, "Lehi's Route to America," *Improvement Era*, Volume 42, p. 26.

Bibliography:

Route followed to the land of promise

Barnes, C. Douglas, *The Improvement Era*, "Lehi's Route to America," ILII, p. 26.

Sjodahl, J. M. *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake: The Deseret News Press, 1927, pp. 92-95.

Note* This manual for Course 15 would be used multiple times by the Sunday School: 1949, 1952, 1955, 1957, 1959, 1961, 1963, 1965.

[1947^](#) [Thomas Stuart Ferguson](#)

Cumorah-Where? Independence, MO: Zion's, 1947

In 1947, Thomas Stuart Ferguson wrote a 78-page booklet, *Cumorah-Where?*. The thrust of the book is

on the location of the Hill Cumorah (he favored the limited "Middle American View"): "Middle America, archaeologically speaking, includes the area from the Valley of Mexico southward to Nicaragua in Central America, thus taking in the lower half of Mexico and northern Central America." (p. 14) On the very next page is an internal map showing the relative positions of principal places of the Book of Mormon. (see map below) On this internal map the land of Nephi is situated on the extreme southern border of the land southward. On page 43 is found a map illustrating the "New York and Mexican Views" (see map below) Combining the two bits of information, one might postulate that Ferguson favored Nicaragua as Lehi's landing site.

[1947 Map: Relative Positions of Principal Places of the Book of Mormon. Thomas Stuart Ferguson, Cumorah--Where?, Oakland, 1947, p. 15]

[1947 Map: New York and Mexican Views. Thomas Stuart Ferguson, Cumorah--Where?, Oakland, 1947, p. 43]

In the Appendix (pp. 71-73), Ferguson argues against the traditional location of Chile as Lehi's landing site. He quotes Frederick J. Pack's April 1938 article in *The Instructor* (see notation). He then writes:

There is an important fact which of itself is entitled to great weight on this question. No hieroglyphic writing has been discovered anywhere in South America. If Lehi landed in South America then Zarahemla, Bountiful, and Nephi were all in South America. If such was the case we might well expect that hieroglyphic inscriptions would have been found there by now. Hundreds of such inscriptions have been found in Middle America. None have yet been discovered south of the Isthmus of Panama. Nor will South America fit the requirements of the 22nd chapter of the book of Alma or of Helaman 3:8, it appears.

It therefore is a possibility that Joseph Smith furnished us with neither the landing point where the Nephites began their history in America nor the location of Cumorah.

1948^ Verla Birrell

Book of Mormon Guidebook, SLC: Stevens and Wallis, 1948

In her Appendix D "Correlation Survey," Verla Birrell correlates her limited geographical setting for the Book of Mormon with the western part of South America. In Chapter III "Topography of the Lands," she also maps out the proposed routes across the sea and the general landing site for the party of Lehi (see maps below). It is interesting that in this map she illustrates two options for Lehi crossing Arabia, and she also has Lehi sailing down the east side of Africa before turning eastward across the Pacific. In reference to Map II she writes: "Scientific maps and charts were called upon to assist the author in projecting the probable course of this migration." The Legend of Map II correlates the flow of Lehi's ocean voyage with numbers as follows:

- (1) Mozambique Current
- (2) Agutha Current
- (3) West Wind Drift
- (4) Peruvian or Humboldt Current
- (5) Omitted area

(<--) Arrows indicate direction of prevailing winds and ocean currents.

(x) Possible landing areas

(__ .) Possible route of Lehi's Party

[1948 Map: Suggested Route of Lehi's Party between the "Old World" and the Western Hemisphere. Verla Birrell, Book of Mormon Guidebook, SLC: Stevens and Wallis, 1948, pp. 62-63]

- (1) Mozambique Current
- (2) Agutha Current
- (3) West Wind Drift
- (4) Peruvian or Humboldt Current
- (5) Omitted area

(<--) Arrows indicate direction of prevailing winds and ocean currents.

(x) Possible landing areas

(__ .) Possible route of Lehi's Party

1949^ Paul M. Hanson

In the Land of the Feathered Serpent, Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1949.

At the time of the publication of this book, Paul M. Hanson was President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. In the Introduction, Israel A. Smith, President of the Church wrote the following: "Apostle Hanson has placed in our hands an effective "sword of truth, . . ." On pages 53-54 we find the following:

The landing place in America of Lehi and his colony is of importance in determining and locating the landing places of the other two colonies that came to America. The foregoing views set forth of the region of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and to the east of the isthmus being the origin of distribution of the higher civilizations of Middle America, appear to be in accord with precise descriptions in the Book of Mormon of the lands wherein civilization was developed and wars occurred between the Nephites and Lamanites" preceding and following the beginning of the Christian Era." . . .

In the opinion of the author, where Lehi landed was in Central America, on the Pacific side, in the region of Guatemala and El Salvador.

1950s?^ W. Cleon Skousen

"Letter written by W. Cleon Skousen, an Archeologist," to Mr. Hampton Price, Salt Lake City, Utah, date?? transcribed and sent to M. Wells Jakeman, Archaeology Dept., BYU.

Mr. Hampton Price

...

Dear Mr. Price:

Upon arrival home today from the coast, I was given your letter of April 30 requesting a copy of the speech which I gave before the Santa Monica Rotary Club recently . . .

The talk was entitled the "ghost City of the Anahuacans and dealt with some of my experiences in the excavated areas of Old Mexico. The city mentioned in the title was built about 1800 years ago and was occupied by a highly civilized race about 387 A.D. . . . All skeletons demonstrated the massacre which they had been fleeing must have attacked the city unawares.

...

By way of preface, let me say that the Smithsonian Institute has three guides in making its investigations. The first has been the mythology and stories of the modern Indian tribes, then a few tablets that have been discovered in the lake region and Arizonia [sic] which have been translated into English. Finally the Institute uses an asserted history called the Book of Mormon which you are no doubt acquainted with and have probably read. The American people incidentally are very interested in American archeological discoveries and there may be some splendid source material for you right there in Salt Lake.

In the light of these records the research has progressed very rapidly and formed the material for my talk which I will finish in outline form.

1. The aborigines of the American continent arrived between 600 and 700 B.C.
2. They probably came by boat and settled in the mountains of South America.

...

(Signed) W. Skousen

[1950 Wells Jakeman LIMITED MESOAMERICA]

Source: V. Garth Norman, personal collection

[1950 Theoretical Model Ferguson & Hunter INTERNAL-Mesoamerican influence]

L.S.=Mesoamerica S. of Isth. of Tehuan. / N.N.=Isth. of Tehuan. / L.N.=N. of Isth. of Tehuan. to Valley of Mexico / H.C.=Tuxtla Mountains of southern Veracruz / Sid. R.=Usumacinta

Source: Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon*, Oakland:Kolob Book, 1950, pp. 36-37.

1950^ Hugh Nibley, Ph.D.

"Lehi in the Desert," *Improvement Era*, January---October, 1950.

Although Hugh Nibley was not an "official" authority in the Church, he was considered one of the foremost intellectuals of his time and was consistently in touch with the Brethren. In 1950 the LDS Church would publish a 10-part series of articles on the travels of Lehi through Arabia in their official magazine, *The Improvement Era*, which would have a tremendous impact on LDS readers for decades to come. With an extensive Egyptian, Arabic and Middle eastern scholastic background, Nibley showed that geographic travel and locations could be plotted as an extension of cultural hints in the text of the Book of Mormon itself. Most particularly he outlined a possible route for Lehi through Arabia (see map below). In 1952, this route would be linked with the Frederick G. Williams statement about "Lehi's Travels" in which Lehi turned eastward at the nineteenth degree parallel (see the notation for 1952), and in 1957 a new map would be published by the Brigham Young University Audio Visual Center in which the 19th degree parallel was distinctly noted (see the notation for 1957). Because many of Nibley's ideas in these articles of 1950 would reappear in the "Course of Study for the Melchizedek Priesthood Quorums of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints," published by The Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in 1957, Nibley's ideas and maps became a standard.

(See the notations for 1951, 1952, 1957, 1988.)

[1950 Map: Lehi's Travels in the Desert. Hugh Nibley, "Lehi in the Desert," in *The Improvement Era*, Oct. 1950, p. 805; See also *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 5, The Book of Mormon: Lehi in the Desert, SLC: Deseret Book and Provo: FARMS, 1988, p. 112*]

[1950^](#) [John A. Widtsoe](#)

"Is Book of Mormon Geography Known?" Improvement Era, 53, 7 (July), 1950, pp. 547, 596-597

As far as can be learned, the Prophet Joseph Smith, translator of the book, did not say where, on the American continent, Book of Mormon activities occurred. Perhaps he did not know. However, certain facts and traditions of varying reliability are used as foundation guides by students of Book of Mormon geography. . . .

Fourth, a statement in the Compendium has been very generally accepted by the Church. This book, published in 1882, dealing with the doctrines of the gospel, was compiled by Franklin D. Richards and James A. Little. Elder Richards was a member of the Council of the Twelve, and James A. Little a prominent and trusted elder in the Church. In the book is a section devoted to "Gems from the History of the Prophet Joseph Smith." The last of these "gems" reads as follows:

Lehi's Travels.--Revelation to Joseph the Seer. The course that Lehi and his company traveled from Jerusalem to the place of their destination: They traveled nearly a south, southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude; then nearly east to the sea of Arabia, then sailed in a southeast direction, and landed on the continent of South America, in Chile, thirty degrees, south latitude."

This, if correctly quoted would be another fixed, certain point in the study of Book of Mormon geography. Curiously enough, however, this statement is not found in the history of Joseph. Investigation points to a slip of paper in possession of the Church Historian said to have been the property of President Frederick G. Williams, one of Joseph's counselors. On the paper are notes pertaining to the doctrine and history of the Church. There also is found the above item relating to "Lehi's Travels." Much doubt has been cast upon the reliability of this statement, since diligent search has failed to trace it to the Prophet. It came into the possession of the Church Historian as a gift from Ezra G. Williams, son of Frederick G. Williams, in 1864, twenty years after the Prophet's death, and was not published until thirty-eight years after the Prophet's death.

[1950?](#) [Walter M. Fairbanks](#)

Unpublished Manuscript

In a 1969 paper in which he summarized the various geographical theories of the Book of Mormon, Terry Baker referred to an unpublished paper by Walter M. Fairbanks as follows:

Theory 5--Panama-Nicaragua Theory by Walter M. Fairbanks

Yet another theory on Book of Mormon lands is here presented. The main landmark for this theory is the narrow neck of land. Here the author interprets Alma 22:32 which says, ". . . from the east to the west sea; . . ." meaning the east didn't have to mean an east sea. This means the narrow neck of land could have been on either side of Lake Nicaragua as is shown on map 11. . . .

Note* On map 11 (Fairbanks' model), Lehi's landing is marked near Coronado Bay, which is close to 9 degrees north latitude in the southern tip of Costa Rica. Baker then says the following:

A more complete analysis of Mr. Fairbanks theory is not possible at this time as it is not published yet. Contemporary with Fairbanks is Walter Stout's theory which is basically the same. Included here is his map

and interpretation thereof (see map 12).

I have yet to find any article or book with Fairbank's model described or shown. Although it is impossible to prove or disprove, I have to wonder if there might be some confusion here. If Walter M. Fairbanks has a model the same as Walter M. Stout, and that model is "basically the same," and one is being formulated at the same time that the other one is, then "Fairbanks" might just be Stout.

[1950 Map 11: Panama-Nicaragua Theory (Lehi's Landing Site). Walter M. Fairbanks, Unpublished Manuscript. Source: Terry R. Baker, "A Summary of Book of Mormon Geography Theories, Grad. Rel. 622, Dr. Chessman, July 1969, map 11.]

Source: Terry R. Baker, "A Summary of Book of Mormon Geography Theories," Grad. Rel. 622, Dr. Chessman, July 1969.

Note* According to Baker, the theory of Walter M. Fairbanks and the theory of Walter M. Stout "basically the same." Baker also credits the information about Fairbanks to a 1950 book by Walter M. Stout (Harmony in Book of Mormon Geography, p. 14). Additionally, Baker follows the Fairbanks map with a map credited to Walter M. Stout.

[1950^ Walter M. Stout](#)

Landing Places of Book of Mormon Colonies, N.p., 1950.

In this paper, Walter Stout attempts to harmonize Book of Mormon geography with the countries of Nicaragua and Costa Rica in Central America. On a map copyrighted in 1950, the "Landing of Lehi" is designated to be on the west coast of southern Costa Rica. (see map below)

[1950 Map: Book of Mormon Lands. Walter M. Stout, Landing Places of Book of Mormon Colonies, N.p., 1950]

[1950^ Walter M. Stout](#)

Harmony in Book of Mormon Geography, Las Vegas: Chief Litho, 1950.

This 32-page booklet represents a more organized attempt to harmonize Book of Mormon geography with the countries of Nicaragua and Costa Rica than his previous paper. It contains a number of maps. Although the booklet and some maps bear a copyright of 1950, some of the maps bear a copyright of 1955 and 1956. By combining the information on these maps, the landing site of Lehi can be identified as being approximately 25 northwest of the Osa Peninsula on the Pacific coast of southern Costa Rica, above Panama. (See maps below)

Note* See also Book of Mormon Practical Geography, Upland, California, 1970. Also A Synopsis of the Book of Mormon Practical Geography, Upland, California, 1972.

[1950 Map: Plate A.A. showing locations of cities. Copyright 1950. Walter M. Stout, Harmony in Book of Mormon Geography, Las Vegas: Chief Litho, 1950]

[1950 Map: Plate D-Physical features of the Book of Mormon setting, showing some modern as well as Book of Mormon names and places. Copyright 1955. Walter M. Stout, Harmony in Book of Mormon Geography, Las Vegas: Chief Litho, 1950]

[1951^](#) [Paul M. Hanson](#)

"Book of Mormon Geography," *Saint's Herald*, January 8, 1959. Reprinted with maps in *Recent Developments* vol. 1, 1984, pp. 77-80.

A rapidly growing body of students today believe the landing place of Lehi and his colony, one of the three groups divinely led to America, was in Central America [see the 1980 map below] not on the coast of Chile in South America as indicated on the maps prepared by the committee. . . .

[Illustrated Map: A Rendition of the Book of Mormon geography map prepared by the Committee on Archaeology in 1894.

Source: Paul M. Hanson, "Book of Mormon Geography," *Saint's Herald*, January 8, 1959. Reprinted with maps in *Recent Developments* vol. 1, 1984, p. 77]

[Illustrated Map: The 1980 Book of Mormon geography map.

Source: Paul M. Hanson, "Book of Mormon Geography," *Saint's Herald*, January 8, 1959. Reprinted with maps in *Recent Developments* vol. 1, 1984, p. 77.]

(see the notation for 1917)

[1952^](#) [Hugh Nibley, Ph.D](#)

Lehi in the Desert and The World of the Jaredites, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1952

Hugh Nibley was and is considered one of the foremost LDS scholars of his time. His opinion has always been held in high regard. Consider the following introduction to Nibley's book by John A. Widtsoe:

The study of the Jaredites, of Lehi in the desert, and of Mulek covers a territory of historical research not formerly invaded by modern scholars. The book could not have been written except with vast acquaintance with sources of historical learning. . . . Evidences for the Book of Mormon are increasing every day. For this reason this book, which becomes a powerful witness of the Book of Mormon, becomes also doubly precious to the leaders of the latter-day faith. Dr. Nibley and the publishers should be congratulated upon bringing the articles which ran originally in *The Improvement Era* [Jan. 1950-Oct.1950 and Sept. 1951-Feb. 1952] into book form. . . .

Thus Nibley's ideas were disseminated to the Church readership and became a standard for study and teaching for many years. This book would even be reprinted in 1988 by F.A.R.M.S. The great importance of this book, although it lacked the illustrated maps of the *Improvement Era* articles, was that it theoretically painted a general picture of Lehi's travels through the Arabian desert and the Jaredites' travel through Asia. It also reinforced the idea that the Frederick G. Williams' statement that Lehi turned east at the nineteenth degree parallel was officially accepted by the Church as "a Revelation to Joseph the Seer" (see the notations for 1836, 1882). The following comments are worthy of note:

As to the direction taken by Lehi's party [in fleeing from Jerusalem] the Book of Mormon is clear and specific. He took what we now know to have been the only possible way out, what with immediate danger threatening from the north, and the eastern and western lands held by opposing powers on the verge of war. Only the south desert, the one land where Israel's traders and merchants had felt at home through the centuries, remained open--even after Jerusalem fell this was so. And the one route into that desert was the great trade-road down the burning trough of the Arabah. . . . (pp. 54-55)

The desert into which Lehi first retreated and in which he made his first long camp has been known since Old Testament times as the wilderness par excellence. . . . From 1 Nephi 8:4 and 7, we learn that by wilderness he means waste, i. e. desert, and not jungle. . . . The particular waste in which Lehi made his first camp is among the most uninviting deserts on earth; though some observers think the area enjoyed a little more rainfall in antiquity than it does today, all are agreed that the change of climate has not been considerable since prehistoric times--it was at best almost as bad then as it is now. Even if Lehi took the main southern route down the Arabah, as he very probably did, since it was the direct road to the Red sea, and a caravan way known to all the merchants, he would be moving through a desert so repelling that even the hardened Bedouins avoid it like the plague. (pp. 55-56)

The men examined the terrain more closely, as Arabs always do after pitching camp in a place where they expect to spend some time, and discovered that the river "emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea," at a point "near the mouth thereof" (2:8-9), which suggests the Gulf of 'Aqaba at a point not far above the Straits of Tiran. When Lehi beheld the view, perhaps [it was] from the sides of Mt. Musafa or Mt. Mendisha. The river would flow between these two elevations, as indicated on maps of the area. . . . (p. 98)

[Upon departing this camp] Like a sudden flash of illumination comes the statement that Lehi by divine instruction "led us in the more fertile parts of the wilderness." (16:16) Wolley and Lawrence describe such "more fertile parts" as "stretching over the flat floor of the plain in long lines like hedges. . . ." They are the depressions of dried up watercourses, sometimes hundreds of miles long. They furnish, according to Bertram Thomas, "the arteries of life in the steppe, the path of Bedowin movement, the habitat of animals by reason of the vegetation--scant though it is--which flourishes in their beds alone. . . ." In Arabia it is this practice of following "the more fertile parts of the wilderness" that alone makes it possible for both men and animals to survive. . . . (pp. 65-66)

Things looked black when Nephi broke his fine steel bow, for the wooden bows of his brothers had "lost their springs" (16:21) . . . I was of course . . . something of a marvel when Nephi "did make out of wood a bow," (16:23) . . . According to the ancient Arab writers, the only bow-wood obtainable in all Arabia was the nab' wood that grew only "amid the inaccessible and overhanging crags" of Mount Jasum and Mount Azd, which are situated in the very region where, if we follow the Book of Mormon, the broken bow incident occurred. Mr. Jasum is in the Mecca area, Mt. Azd in the Serat Mountains farther south but also near the coast. . . . (pp. 67-68)

After traveling a vast distance in a south-southeasterly direction, the party struck off almost due eastward through the worst desert of all, where they "did wade through much affliction," to emerge in a state of almost complete exhaustion into a totally unexpected paradise by the sea. There is such a paradise in the Qara Mountains on the southern coast of Arabia. To reach it by moving "nearly eastward" from the Red Sea coast, one would have to turn east on the nineteenth parallel. In The Improvement Era for September 1950 [actually Oct. 1950] the present writer published a map in which his main concern was to make Lehi reach the sea in the forested sector of the Hadhramaut, and no other consideration dictated this sketching of the map. He foolishly overlooked the fact that Dr. John A Widtsoe had published in the Era some months previously what purports to be a "Revelation to Joseph the Seer," in which it is stated that Lehi's party "traveled nearly a south, southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude; then nearly east to the sea of Arabia." (Widtsoe, "Is Book of Mormon Geography Known?" IE 53, 1950, p. 547)

By an interesting coincidence, the route shown in the author's map turned east exactly at the nineteenth parallel. This correlation of data from two totally different sources is a strong indication that both are correct. The only other possible route would have been down the western shore of the Red sea from Necho's canal, and on such a course one cannot turn eastward until passing the tenth parallel, and then it is not the Arabian Sea that one finds but the Indian Ocean. Along with this, certain other rigorous conditions must be fulfilled which can only be met on the south coast of Arabia. (pp. 124-125)

Only one way lay open, the hardest and wildest, through the mountains that border the Red Sea and then due east over the western extension of the terrible "Empty Quarter" where the party saw so much affliction. they had to turn east when they did because the whole southwest corner of the peninsula comprised the kingdom of the Sabaeans, probably the strongest, richest, and most thickly settled state Arabia has ever had. . . . (p. 128)

Of the Qara Mountains which lie in that limited sector of the coast of south Arabia which Lehi must have reached if he turned east at the nineteenth parallel, Bertram Thomas, one of the few Europeans who has ever seen them, writes:

What a glorious place! Mountains three thousand feet high basking above a tropical ocean, their seaward slopes velvety with waving jungle, their roofs fragrant with rolling yellow meadows, beyond which the mountains slope northwards to a red sandstone steppe. . . . Great was my delight when in 1928 I suddenly came upon it all from out of the arid wastes of the southern borderlands. . . .

Compare this with Nephi's picture [1 Nephi 17:5-7 is quoted] It is virtually the same scene . . . When in 1843 Von Wrede gave a glowing description of the mountains of the Hadramaut to which Lehi came, the great Von Humboldt and, following him, of course, the whole learned world, simply refused to believe him. Thomas' delectable mountains were unknown to the west until less than twenty-five years ago. Though "the southern coasts of Arabia have admirable harbors," they appear not to have been used, with a few possible exceptions, until well after the time of Christ.

Watching Lehi's travel-worn band wending its way down the pleasant valleys to the sea, one is moved to reflect that they have come an unconscionably long way just to build a ship. Well, let the reader suggest some other route. The best guide to Arabia at the time of the writing of the Book of mormon imagined forests and lakes in the center of the peninsula, while insisting that the whole coastline was "a rocky wall . . . as dismal and barren as can be: not a blade of grass or a green thing," to be found. The Book of Mormon reverses the picture and has Lehi avoid the heart of the continent to discover smiling woodlands on the south coast. Where else could he have found his timber on all the coast of Arabia? "It is quite probable," writes a present-day authority, "that Solomon has to transport his ships, or the material for them, from the Mediterranean, for where on the shores of the Red Sea could timber be found for ship-building?"

And by what other route could Lehi have reached his happy shore? To the north lay enemy country, the Mediterranean was a world of closed harbors and closed seas, as dangerous as in the days of Wenamon, who was repeatedly stopped by enemies and pirates, the deserts to the east of Jerusalem swarmed with hostile and warring tribes, north and central Arabia were the classic grazing and fighting grounds of the Arabs, and so crisscrossed with trade routes in the time of Ptolemy "that there appears little left of the inaccessible desert: 'in general Ptolemy knows of no desert. . . .'"

Egypt offered no escape to one marked as an enemy by the pro-Egyptian party. Only one way lay open, the hardest and wildest, through the mountains that border the Red Sea and then due east over the western extension of the terrible "Empty Quarter" where the party saw so much affliction. They had to turn east when they did because the whole southwest corner of the peninsula comprised the kingdom of the Sabaeans, probably the strongest, richest, and most thickly settled state Arabia has ever had.

So, long and painful though it was, Lehi's itinerary turns out to have been actually the shortest and safest, if not the only one he could have taken. On the shore of the Arabian Sea the story of Lehi in the Desert properly ends. Though this has been but a preliminary telling, still there is enough to justify certain

reflections by way of summary. (pp. 125-128)

Note* In this book Nibley would also include a rebuttal to Ariel L. Crowley's article, "Lehi's River Laman," in the January, 1944 issue of the Improvement Era (see the 1944 notation). Nibley writes:

One only speaks of "rivers of water" in a country where rivers do not run all the time. But in the spring it is by no means unusual to find rivers in the regions through which Lehi was moving, as a few examples will show. . . .

Given the right season of the year, then--and the Book of Mormon is obliging enough to give it--one need not be surprised at rivers in northwestern Arabia. It was this seasonal phenomenon that led Ptolemy to place a river between Yambu and Meccah with perfect correctness.

That invaluable researcher and indefatigable sleuth, Ariel L. Crowley, has suggested with considerable astuteness that the river of Laman was a very different kind of stream from the "rivers of water" of which we have been speaking, being nothing less than Necho's canal from the Nile to the Red Sea. The greater part of Brother Crowley's study is devoted to proving that there was such a canal, but that is no issue, since it is not disputed. What we cannot believe is that the big ditch was Laman's river, and that for a number of reasons of which we need here give only two.

1) While noting that Nephi's account of the exodus "is so precisely worded that it bears the stamp of deliberate, careful phrasing," Crowley fails to note that nothing is more precise and specific than Nephi's report of the direction of the march, and that, as we have seen, he never mentions a westerly direction, which must have been taken to reach the place. Brother Crowley assumes that "into the wilderness" means "by the Wilderness Way" to Egypt, first "for the sake of hypothesis," then, without proof, as a fact. There is no expression commoner in the East than "into the wilderness," which of course is not restricted to any such area. The last place in the world to flee from the notice of men would be to the border of Egypt, which at all times in ancient history was very heavily fortified and closely guarded (see the Story of Sinuhe); and Lehi as a member of the anti-Egyptian party would be the last man in the world to seek refuge in Egypt.

2) Crowley calls Necho's canal a "mighty stream," and says that it lay "at the ancient crossroads of continents, perhaps as well-known as any place on earth in 600 B.C." Then why wasn't it known to Lehi? . . . otherwise it is improbable that he would have given it a new name. "In this very fact," says Crowley, "lies confirmation of the recent creation of the stream." Just how long does it take news to travel in the East? The canal was at least ten years old, it had taken years to build, a wonder of the world, an inestimable boon to world trade, less than two hundred miles from Lehi's doorstep by a main highway, and yet at a time of ceaseless and feverish coming and going between Egypt and Palestine, neither Lehi, the great merchant with his sound Egyptian education, nor his enterprising and ambitious sons, had ever heard of it! . . . Nor does Nephi ever say or imply that it was a great river; it was not a waterway at all, but a "river of water," which is a very different thing. (pp. 93-95)

[1953^ Dewey Farnsworth](#)

Book of Mormon Evidences in Ancient America. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1953.

Abundantly illustrated with photos of archaeological findings from ancient America, this large 176-page book attempts to provide archaeological and historical support for a hemispheric view of Book of Mormon geography.

On page 30 Dewey Farnsworth writes the following:

ALONG WITH MOST OF THE WRITERS OF OUR BELIEF IN THE LAST 100 YEARS

I ALSO AGREE TO A SOUTH AMERICAN LANDING OF LEHI.

"we read in the Book of Mormon that . . . Lehi went down by the Red Sea to the great Southern Ocean and crossed over to this land, and landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien." (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith, p. 267.)

I am one of those who believe that President Joseph Fielding Smith is a prophet of God and I do not feel that he would have published this in his book, entitled Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, if he had not felt that it was Joseph Smith's words. So Joseph Smith believed that Lehi landed south of Darien or in South America. This belief is shared by almost all of the members of the Church with whom I have come in contact.

Farnsworth then quotes the Lehi's Travels" statement from pp. 453 of B. H. Roberts' New Witnesses for God, vol. 2 (see the 1903 notation). He also quotes from pp. 577-578 as follows:

From the Book of Mormon and the word of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith it is learned that Lehi's colony traversed from Jerusalem, nearly a southeast direction, until they came to the nineteenth degree north latitude; thence nearly east to the sea of Arabia. Here the colony built a ship in which to cross the great waters, which separated them from the land of promise. They sailed in a southeasterly direction, and landed on the continent of South America, in about thirty degrees south latitude.

From Jerusalem their journey to the promised land is supposed to have occupied about twelve years.

These comments were in favor of a South American landing, however what Farnsworth fails to note are the changes which B. H. Roberts made to this material in his 1909 edition. In that edition he cast doubt on the Frederick G. Williams statement--and thus a South American landing site. (see the 1903 and the 1909 notations)

Farnsworth concludes with the following:

This student of Peruvian archaeology calls attention to the fact that "the earliest civilizations observed in Peru were of as high a grade as if not superior to the latest." The significance of this is that an immense period of time must have been required for the development and spread of this so-called classic culture before it reached the stage which the data given by Uhle would place at least 2,000 years before the Spanish conquest, or about 500 B.C." (Ayar-Incas, p. 182, V. I.)

[1954^](#) [Norman C. Pierce](#)

Another Cumorah, Another Joseph. SLC: Norman Pierce, 1954, pp. 13-14.

Norman Pierce writes:

Nephi seems to make it very clear that he embarked "toward the promised land" from the tip of the Arabian Peninsula . . . We find that the tip of Arabia is about 15 degrees north latitude on exactly the same parallel as Honduras. Furthermore, two major ocean currents follow this same parallel and flow directly "toward the promised land."

Once out into the Arabian Sea, the great Monsoon Drift sweeps across the Indian Ocean, past the tip of India, and into the East Indies. And once through the East Indies, the strong Equatorial Counter Current flows swiftly and straight to Central America and centers on Honduras. ALL OTHER ROUTES FACE OPPOSING OCEAN CURRENTS.

How anyone ever had them arrive 3,000 miles farther to the south in Valparaiso, Chile, against a north flowing current, is somewhat of a mystery. One suggested route is south of Australia and east to the tip of South America, thence up to Valparaiso, Chile. But a study of this route brings us against the Monsoon

Drift, and against the West Australian Current before striking the West Wind Drift, that leads to the tip of South America. And what a detour that would be! 4,000 miles southward, 8,000 miles eastward, and 2,000 miles northward to Valparaiso. 14,000 miles in all! And one can hardly construe this route as starting out "toward the promised land" with compass-like precision such as a Liahona warrants.

Then after they arrive in Valparaiso, what a Marathon hike lies ahead of them, over the most rugged, impassible, impenetrable country in the world; from six to seven thousand miles, through the towering Andes, the tropical jungles of Central America, the parching deserts of northern Mexico, the mighty rivers of the United States, to get to the vicinity of the hill Cumorah in New York, the valley of dry bones . . . What a feat! What an accomplishment! --of imagination. . . .

The Equatorial Counter Current is as well defined as the banks of a river as it flows between two opposing ocean currents and centers itself on the Promised Land at the Bay or Gulf of Fonseca by Honduras.

[1954 Map: Honduras and San Salvador, Central-America By E. G. Squier ~1854 Reproduced with Additional Topography by Jean R. Driggs ~1925. Norman C. Pierce, Another Cumorah, Another Joseph, n.p., 1954]

[1954 Map: Pacific Route of Nephites Norman C. Pierce, Another Cumorah, Another Joseph, n.p., 1954]

[1954 Map: Landing Place of Lehi Norman C. Pierce, Another Cumorah, Another Joseph, n.p., 1954]

[1955^ John Keith Pope](#)

Launching the Lehi, San Francisco: Academy Phototype Service, 1955.

In this article (and a number of others during this time period) Pope foretells an expedition that will sail on a raft without food or water from Saudi Arabia to Guatemala, manned by a crew of five or six persons. The purpose of the trip is to show that a voyage such as the one that brought Lehi and his family to America is possible. [L.M.]

[1955^ G. Reynolds and J. Sjodahl \(Philip C. Reynolds comp.\)](#)

Commentary on the Book of Mormon (7 vols), SLC: Deseret Book, 1955, Vol. 1.

The following are geographical commentary relative to Lehi's travels from Jerusalem to the Promised Land:

Foreword: Note* The Foreword (pp. vii-xi) is full of cautionary words regarding Book of Mormon geography, including George Q. Cannon's article from 1890. It is hard to know whether these cautionary words were derived partly from the writings of George Reynolds and partly from the writings of Janne Sjodahl, or whether they were mostly from Philip Reynolds.

Note on Lehi: In the notes on the 1st chapter of 1 Nephi, there is a commentary on Lehi. It seems to be primarily taken from Reynolds' 1891 The Dictionary of the Book of Mormon (see notation). The text is as follows:

LEHI: We have no account in the Book of Mormon of the precise road which Lehi and his family took when they left Jerusalem. Undoubtedly they traveled through the wilderness of Judea southward till they reached the eastern arm of the Red Sea. They journeyed along the Arabian shore of that sea for some little

distance, till they came to a valley through which a small stream flowed. To the river Lehi gave the name Laman, after his eldest son; and the valley he called Lemuel. Here they pitched their tents and rested for some time. . . .

Before long, Lehi was directed to resume his journey; and a wonderful instrument, prepared by Divine condescension, called a Liahona, or compass, was given him to guide the wandering feet of the company in their travels. So particular was the Lord that Lehi's party should not come in contact with the people of Arabia through which land they passed, that He gave them the command that they should not cook their meat, lest the flame or smoke from their fires should draw attention towards them . . .

To their next tarrying place, which they reached in four days, they gave the name of Shazer. After a short rest, during which time they killed game for food, they again took up their line of march, keeping in the most fertile parts of the wilderness, which were near the borders of the Red Sea. Thus they continued journeying for some time, when, by direction of the Liahona, they changed the course of their travels, and moved almost directly east across the Arabian peninsula, until they reached the waters on its eastern coast. There they found a very fruitful land, which they called Bountiful, because of the abundance of its natural productions. to the sea which washed its shores they gave the name of Irreantum, which, being interpreted, means many waters. If we understand correctly, these waters were a portion of the gulf of Oman, or Arabian sea. The journey thus far occupied eight years from the time they left Jerusalem. . . .

Nephi, by Divine direction, built a ship to carry them across these great waters. . . .After many days, the vessel with its precious freight reached the shores of this continent, at a place, we are told by the Prophet Joseph Smith, near where the city of Valparaiso, Chili, now stands. . . .

The course taken by Lehi and his people has been revealed with some detail. We are told by the Prophet Joseph Smith that Lehi and his company traveled in nearly a south-southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude, then, nearly east to the sea of Arabia, then sailed in a southeast direction, and landed on the continent of South America, in Chili, thirty degrees south latitude. This voyage would take them across the Indian and South Pacific Oceans. (pp. 12-14)

[Ch. 2] Verse 4. Into the Wilderness. Students of the Book of Mormon should notes that the Hebrews gave the name of wilderness or desert to places that were suitable for pastures for sheep and cattle even though they were not cultivated. The desert of Judea, south of Jerusalem, which is referred to in this chapter, was the place in which John the Baptist first preached repentance (Matt. 3:1; Luke 1:80), and it was, probably the wilderness into which Jesus was "led up of the spirit," to be tempted. (Matt. 4:1) At the time of Joshua it had six cities. (Jos. 15:61, 62) It is now, or was a few years ago when the writer (J. M. Sjodahl) was a missionary there for the Latter-day Saints, one of the most dreary and desolate regions of the country. (p. 25)

Verse 5. The Borders of the Red Sea. May have been near the head of the Gulf of Akabah, the eastern arm of the Red Sea, which is separated from the western arm by the Sinai Peninsula, where the children of Israel wandered for forty years. . . . (p. 25)

Note* No commentary is given on the location of the Valley of Lemuel.

[Ch. 4] Verses 28-31. The conflict in the cave. Nephi and his brothers had now found refuge in a cave. Possibly the very sepulcher which Abraham had bought of Ephron (Gen. 23:3-16), situated at Hebron, about eighteen miles south of Jerusalem. Here Sarah, Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah were buried. It is to this day one of the very sacred places of the Mohammedan world. . . .(p. 34)

[Ch. 16] Verse 13. Direction. Having crossed the river Laman, they traveled for four days in a south-southeast direction to a place which they called Shazer.

Shazer. This name may have been, originally, the Hebrew chazer (or chazier) "grass" (Ps. 104:14). It must have been an inviting place to weary travelers. The little company remained there long enough to replenish their store of provisions. Then they continued their journey along the eastern shore of the Red Sea.

Verse 14. And we did go forth again in the wilderness. Following the sea shore, Lehi and his company, after "the space of many days," must have come to some place not very far from the present Medina, one of the sacred cities of Islam, in the kingdom of Hejaz. This part of Arabia was at one time settled by Israelites of the tribe of Simeon. . . . Its inheritance was part of the territory of Judah, in the southern part of the country (Josh. 1:1-9), but after a while it seems that Judah took back part of the land allotted to Simeon. (1 Kings 19:3) In 1 Chron. 4:24-31 several cities are enumerated and the information given that they were the cities of the sons of Simeon "unto the reign of David." In the same chapter we are told that 500 of the sons of Simeon, during the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, emigrated to Mt. Seir, the mountainous country of the Edomites, east of the Dead Sea, while others went "to the entrance of Gedor, even unto the east side of the valley," where Hamites had dwelt of old (vv. 39, 40). This is supposed to be the region in which Medina and Mekka are situated, and an Arab tradition has it that the very sanctuary at Mekka was founded by Israelites of the tribe of Simeon, at the time of King David. (pp. 166-167)

Note on Arabia: On page 172 the following is part of some notes on Arabia. "After the destruction of Jerusalem, a large number of Jews found refuge in this country and became influential. . . .

[Ch. 17] Verse 1. We did travel nearly eastward. From Jerusalem to Nahom, the course of the company of Lehi had been in a south-easterly direction. They had perhaps followed the mountain chain which runs parallel with the Sea. At Nahom, the direction was changed to "nearly eastward." They must have found a convenient mountain pass leading to the interior of the country. (p. 173)

Verse 4. Eight years in the wilderness. The sojourn in the wilderness lasted eight years. While traveling in a south-easterly direction, they may have reached some point in the present Yemen, a thousand miles from Jerusalem. Traveling in an easterly direction, another thousand miles would have taken them to the Arabian Sea, perhaps in the present country of Oman. They could have made that in eight years.

Arabia is a large country, almost as large as one-fourth of Europe. Along the western part of the peninsula a mountain chain runs parallel with the Red Sea. From this mountain range the country slopes toward the east. It is sparsely watered, but has many oases. The province of Oman is mountainous, with majestic peaks which lift their heads as high as 10,000 feet above the sea. (pp. 173-174)

Verse 5. Bountiful. This name was given to the last station of the journey through the wilderness, on account of the abundance of fruit found there, as well as wild honey. (Vv. 5 and 6) The Hebrew name would probably be "Shaepha Rab," meaning, "great quantity" or "great supply." That word is found as a proper name in 1 Chron. 4:37, where Shiphah is mentioned as one of the descendants of Simeon and father of one of the princes who, according to the records of Hezekiah, fled to Gedor, on the "east side of the valley."

Irreantum. All we know about this word is that it means, "many waters." (p. 174)

[Ch. 18] Verses 1-4 The ship completed. Nephi and his brethren and other members of the colony now applied themselves to the work of construction of the ship, in accordance with the instructions Nephi received from time to time of the Lord.

Like all Hebrews of that time, they were, no doubt, somewhat familiar with ships and ship building. There was a navigable lake in Palestine, the Sea of Galilee. Smaller boats and larger craft were constantly

plying its sometimes turbulent waves. They were familiar with the extensive Phoenician shipping. . . . And it is on record that Solomon established stations at Ezion-geber and Elath, where he built ships for which the king of Tyre furnished navigators and crews, and that these ships were dispatched to the land of Ophir, whence they returned with costly cargoes, especially gold and precious stones. (1 Kings 9:28, 10, 11)

Just where Ophir was is not known. There are all kinds of conjectures on that subject. Ophir may be another name for Africa. . . . Mr. Bancroft has the following on Ophir:

The Phoenicians were employed about a thousand years before the Christian era, by Solomon, king of the Jews, and Hiram, king of Tyre, to navigate their fleets to Ophir and Tarshish. they returned, by way of the Mediterranean, to the port of Joppa, after a three year's voyage, laden with gold, silver, precious stones, ivory, cedar, apes and peacocks. Several authors have believed that they had two distinct fleets, one of which went to that land since known as America, and the other to India. Huet, bishop of Avranches, and other authors, are persuaded that Ophir was the modern Sofala [Salalah?] . . .

(p. 183)

Note* No commentary is made on 1 Nephi 18:23 in which we find the words: "after we had sailed for the space of many days we did arrive at the promised land; and we went forth upon the land ." However we find the following in the "General Notes" at the end of chapter 18 on pages 193-194:

The Landing Place. The question, Where did Lehi land? is discussed in, "An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon," pp. 92-95 and 411-432 [see the notation for 1927]. Several views are given.

If we accept the commonly held view, which has been stated by Elder George Reynolds, among others, that the landing place was on the coast of Chile, at about 30 degrees south latitude, we may suppose that Lehi and his colony embarked somewhere on the coast of the present sultanate of Oman in Arabia, and that their course was set nearly southeasterly. At first they might have encountered adverse trade winds and perhaps turbulent sea, but as they reached the 30th parallel the trade wind would have been favorable for a course south of Australia, between that continent and Tasmania, and then north of New Zealand toward the coast of Chile. The nearest harbor in the northward path of the trade wind would be the place where Coquimbo now is located, not far from Valparaiso. (See a recent map of the World, published by the National Geographic Magazine.)

Coquimbo has one of the finest harbors in Chile. It is situated on the river that has the same name. And it is not very far from the Andes mountains. The population of the port was (in 1920) estimated at 160,256. Its latitude is 30 degrees south. (pp. 192-193)

By comparing these comments with those found in Reynold's Dictionary (see the 1891 notation) some differences can be found. In 1891, Reynolds had Lehi traveling "down the shores of the Red Sea." No mention is made that they "perhaps followed the mountain chain which runs parallel with the Sea," although it is not clear whether to "follow" the mountain chain means that they still remained on the coast or traveled within the mountains. While in 1891 it is noted that Nephi sailed "across the Indian and South Pacific Oceans," no mention is made of the italicized details above, although this might have been implied.

[1957^](#) [Hugh Nibley](#)

An Approach to the Book of Mormon: Course of Study for the Melchizedek Priesthood Quorums of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Published by The Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1957, pp. 199-200.

In this 1957 manual, Nibley restructures the material he first published in Lehi in the Desert into lessons. Although the emphasis on culture is retained, less material dealing with geography is present. Perhaps for

this reason a special map of "Lehi's Travels in the Old World" was prepared and published at B.Y.U in this same year (see map below). Nibley does make the following comment on Lehi's travels:

The Desert Route: It is obvious that the party went down the eastern and not the western shore of the Red Sea (as some have suggested) from the fact that they changed their course and turned east at the nineteenth parallel of latitude, and " . . . did travel nearly eastward from that time forth . . ." passing through the worst desert of all, where they " . . . did travel and wade through much affliction . . .," and " . . . did live upon raw meat in the wilderness. . ." (1 Ne. 17:1-2) Had the party journeyed on the west coast of the Red Sea, they would have had only water to the east of them at the 19th parallel and for hundreds of miles to come. But why the 19th parallel? Because Joseph Smith is reliably reported to have made an inspired statement to that effect. (note 47) He did not know, of course, and nobody knew until the 1930's, that only by taking a "nearly eastward" direction from that point could Lehi have reached the one place where he could find the rest and the materials necessary to prepare for his long sea voyage.

Of the Qara Mountains which lie in that limited sector of the coast of South Arabia which Lehi must have reached if he turned east at the 19th parallel, Bertram Thomas, one of the few Europeans who has ever seen them, writes:

What a glorious place! Mountains three thousand feet high basking above a tropical ocean, their seaward slopes velvety with waving jungle, their roofs fragrant with rolling yellow meadows . . .

As to the terrible southeastern desert "The Empty Quarter," which seems from Nephi's account to have been the most utter desolation of all, Burton could write as late as 1852:

Of Rub'a al-Khali I have heard enough, from credible relators, to conclude that its horrid depths swarm with a large and half-starving population; that it abounds in Wadys, valleys, gullies and ravines, that the land is open to the adventurous traveler. (note 49)

The best western authority on Arabia was thus completely wrong about the whole nature of the great southeast quarter of generation after the Book of Mormon appeared, and it was not until 1930 that the world knew that the country in which Lehi's people were said to have suffered the most is actually the worst and most repelling desert on earth.

In Nephi's picture of the desert everything checks perfectly. There is not one single slip amid a wealth of detail, the more significant because it is so casually conveyed.

[1957 Hugh Nibley Illustrated Map Book of Mormon Study Maps: Lehi's Travels in the Old World]
Source: Prepared by Dr. Hugh Nibley and Audio Visual Center, Brigham Young University, 1957.

Note* This map was used by Nibley in his lectures to students at BYU--See the 1993 notation.

[1957 J.M. Sjodahl](#)

A Suggested Key to Book of Mormon Geography, SLC: Deseret Book, 1957

Note* This is a reprint of Sjodahl's 1927 book. (See the 1927 notation)

[1957 George Reynolds](#)

Ed. & Arr. by Philip C. Reynolds

Book of Mormon Geography: The Lands of the Nephites and Jaredites SLC: Deseret Book, 1957

This is a reprint by Philip Reynolds of all of George Reynolds' material from the 1880's, which in theory

subscribed to a hemispheric model (South America / Panama / North America). The material was close to 70 years old. (see the notation for 1888)

1957[^] George Reynolds

Ed. & Arr. by Philip C. Reynolds

Complete Concordance of the Book of Mormon, SLC: Deseret Book, 1957

This is a reprint by Philip Reynolds of George Reynolds' Concordance material from 1904 (see the 1900 notation). Although certain references implied a hemispheric model (South America / Panama / North America), the work continued to be the concordance reference for dedicated students of the Book of Mormon until the age of computers. Note that while some of the following excerpts related to Lehi's travels are abbreviated from Reynold's 1991 Dictionary (especially the reference to Lehi), I have yet to verify them in the 1900 or 1904 Concordance:

Lehi - A Hebrew Prophet of the tribe of Manasseh whom the Lord led out of Jerusalem B.C. 600, with his family and others and brought them to America.

Lemuel, Valley of - After three days' journey through the desert, bordering the upper waters of the Red Sea (Gulf of Akaba), Lehi and his colony reached a small valley wherein they camped and built an altar to the Lord. To this valley they gave the name of Lemuel.

Nahom - A place on the line of travel of Lehi and his company through the Arabian desert. Here Ishmael died and was buried.

Bountiful - A portion of Arabia Felix, near the Arabian Sea.

(see the 1900 notation)

1957[^] Ross T. Christensen

"A Question for the Editor: Lehi's Landing Place." in UAS Newsletter, Num. 46, B. Y. U. , Provo, Utah: The University Archaeological Society, December 17, 1957, 46.60, pp.

46.60 "A Question for the Editor: Lehi's Landing Place."

Sir: Until the mid-1940's some of the Elders told us that Lehi of the Book of Mormon landed on the west coast of South America, somewhere around 30-32 degrees south latitude, and gradually worked his way northward, but gave no source of authority. Now and for some years, however, Lehi's supposed landing place is in Central America. Why has this shift been made?--Mrs. A. Hyatt Verrill.

The official view of the LDS Church with regard to the landing place of Lehi has not changed; in fact there has never been any official LDS view. The landing place is not a matter of doctrine. All interpretations of Book of Mormon geography have been private interpretations, since the Book itself does not specify the modern equivalents of its ancient geographical locations, nor have they been divinely revealed to the Church membership. That is something we of the present generation are privileged to investigate.

Beginning in 1882 with the publication of the first American edition of The Compendium, by Franklin D. Richards and James A. Little, the Panama identification--that is, that "the narrow neck of land" of the Book of Mormon is the Isthmus of Panama--was very popular among Latter-day Saints. Beginning at least as

early as the 1920's, however, certain investigators began to consider the possibility that this narrow neck was the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, located in southern Mexico. Dr. M. Wells Jakeman, who established the Department of Archaeology at BYU in 1946, has held to this latter opinion. The two contrasting views require different landing places for Lehi. It now appears that the Tehuantepec view, which requires a landing place perhaps in southern Central America, is rapidly gaining favor among serious students of the Book of Mormon.--RTC.

[1957^ Rulon S. Howells](#)

The Mormon Story: A Pictorial Account of Mormonism, SLC: Bookcraft, 1957.

In this book Rulon Howells notes in the Preface:

To combine historical events with their locations on maps and to supplement with available pictures, it helps one to gain a more accurate and lasting impression of this fascinating people, whose church's real name is "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

In telling the story of the Book of Mormon, Howells illustrates the journeys and the civilizations with a map (see below). On this map he writes on either side of a line with arrows coming across the Pacific to the western coast of South America: "A small group of people came from Babylon to the Americas about 2200 B.C. Another small group came from Palestine to the Americas about 590 B.C."

[1957 Illustration: Where the Book of Mormon Story Took Place. Rulon S. Howells, *The Mormon Story: A Pictorial Account of Mormonism, SLC: Bookcraft, 1957, p. 24*]

[1958^ Thomas Stuart Ferguson](#)

One Fold and One Shepherd, San Francisco, California: Books of California, 1958.

[1958^ Riley Dixon](#)

Just One Cumorah, S.L.C.: Bookcraft, 1958

In 1958, Riley Dixon produced an extensive defense of the Modified Hemispheric theory.

(pp. 35-37) The direction [Lehi's group] took is given in a revelation to Joseph Smith and preserved by Frederick G. Williams. This revelation has been questioned by some individuals. . . . [the Lehi's Travels statement is quoted] . . . Reasons for believing that the revelation as quoted above is authentic and correct are:

First: Those who question the revelation inconsistently accept the former part of the revelation as being true. The Book of Mormon says: "They traveled south, southeast." but it does not say, "They traveled until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude and traveling east or nearly in that direction, Lehi's colony was led directly to a land where it could get timber to build its ship and acquire supplies of food that were so needed. Few knew of this land Bountiful at the time this revelation was given, nor did the world have that knowledge for more than fifty years after the revelation. . . .

Second: The Prophet had many revelations which were never published . . .

Third: Who was Frederick G. Williams? Was he a reliable character? . . . in 1832 he was chosen as a Counselor to Joseph, the Prophet. . . . During 1832 to 1837 he was very closely associated with the Prophet

in all the movements, persecutions, and activities of the Church. For these reasons he could have been present when the Prophet announced a revelation which explained the direction that was followed by Lehi. . . . The publication [of Frederick G. Williams' paper] in 1882 by Elder Franklin D. Richards of the Council of the Twelve does not discredit it. At that time and for many years after, the course mapped by the revelation was accepted by Church members.

(p. 39) The point of [Lehi's] landing was about thirty degrees south latitude on the shores of the country now known as Chile.

[1958 Theoretical Model Riley Dixon MODIFIED HEMISPHERIC]

L.S.=S. of Panama / N.N.=Panama / L.N.=N. of Panama / H.C.=New York

Source: Riley Dixon, *Just One Cumorah SLC*, 1958. Information listed in John L. Sorenson, *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book*, p. 66

1958

NWAF Excavates Chiapa de Corzo in Chiapas, Mexico & Makes Plaster Cast of Stela 5 at Izapa

Beginning in 1958, the NWAF made an extensive excavation of the ruins at Chiapa de Corzo in Chiapas, Mexico.

In 1953, Wells Jakeman wrote a 4-part series of articles for the UAS Bulletin concerning the correlation of Stela 5 at Izapa with Lehi's dream of the Tree-of-Life in the Book of Mormon. This created sufficient interest in this stela such that in 1958 a plaster cast was made of Stela 5 by Ross Christensen, Carl H. Jones, Welby Ricks, and Alfred Bush. Wells Jakeman also published a book on Stela 5 in 1958. (For further details see Joseph Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, chapter 9.)

1959[^] Hartt Wixom (abt. DeVere Baker)

"Lehi Raft Captain Tells Communist Threat Cure," in the Daily Universe, Brigham Young University. Provo, Utah: Wednesday, January 7, 1959, p. 1

Hartt Wixom, the editor of the Daily Universe writes the following:

"The Communist threat to the Free World is greater than most people realize and the young people of our Church are in the best position to combat the threat."

This opinion was recently voiced to the Daily Universe by Mr. and Mrs. DeVere Baker who spent ten years in Communist influenced countries while training crews on the rafts Lehi I, II, III, and IV. Mr. Baker has spent considerable time during the last ten years sailing Pacific Ocean currents to prove persons could have crossed the Pacific Ocean as detailed in the Book of Mormon, publication of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"As a result of the successful voyage of the Lehi IV from the West Coast of South America to the Hawaiian Islands," reports Mr. Baker, "Hawaiian history books are being re-written." . . .

"I've known all along that the Book of Mormon account of the migration of Asiatic people to South America is correct, while those advocated by the majority of the world's historians are false," said Baker. "The world's historians believed that Near East-Asian influence in South America came about by races migrating island by island to the Gilberts and hence to South America.

In order to do that their motorless rafts would have had to sail upstream against both wind and current."

DeVere Baker will explain the objectives and results of the Lehi raft voyage when he addresses faculty members and interested students Thursday. He will speak at 4:15 p.m. in 1100 Smith Family Living Center.

Instead, the Near East-Asian groups sailed to South America as outlined in the Book of Mormon. Then, Hagoth the ship builder, and his crew, as well as those who followed after him, drifted easily westward from South America to the Hawaiian and other islands. . . .

Baker said that in spite of the hardships, the Lehi IV proved that sailing on natural ocean currents from South America to Hawaii would have been relatively easy for migrating races. . . .

When asked what his plans would be for the future, Mr. Baker replied, "We plan to sail the same course as did Lehi of old--from the Red Sea to South America."

[1959^](#) [Harold B. Lee](#)

Quarterly Historical Report for the Andes Mission, Nov. 1, 1959

On November 1, 1959, at the Andes Mission headquarters in Lima, Peru, Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve offered the following insights on the subject of Lehi's landing site:

There have been many people who have tried to guess where the country was where the followers of Lehi landed when they came to America. No one knows exactly where this location was. In the wisdom of the Lord it has not been definitely revealed. We know that at the time of the crucifixion of the Lord the whole face of the earth was changed and the arrangements of mountains and valleys and rivers may not be the same as they were before that time. But from the writings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and of other inspired men, it seems all are in agreement that the followers of Lehi came to the western shores of South America. . . .

I have recalled today that we are now very close to the center of some of the greatest Indian population in the world, and in all likelihood we may be near the place, in these two countries of Chili and Peru, where there has been a greater intermixture of Indian blood perhaps, than any other country on this continent. . . . I believe we are not far from the place where the history of the people of Lehi commenced in western America.

. . . As I look up and down the west coast of South America, I find very few seaports; and doesn't it seem likely to you that those who came here by ships directed by the Lord would be guided to a place where there was the most favorable landing? Where are the two most favorable seaports on the west coast? You know the answer to that question. Lima, Peru, and close by, Santiago, over on the west coast. . . . (Quarterly Historical Report for the Andes Mission, November 1, 1959.)

Source: ^Typewritten copy, p. 1 in possession of Dennis C. Davis, Ogden, Utah, personal communication. See also ^Paul R. Cheesman, *The World of the Book of Mormon*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978, p. 24.

Note* In his 1983 manuscript, "Mexico, Do You Know Who YOu Are?", Joseph L. Allen writes the following concerning the above incident:

As to the rhetorical questions [in the quote above], it appears to me that President Lee is neither presenting a revelation nor a scientific treatise of the landing of Lehi's colony. He is presenting a gospel sermon on the great heritage of those people, and proposed that landing site as a possibility.

[1959^](#) [Captain DeVere Baker](#)

The Raft Lehi IV, USA: DeVere Baker, 1959

Although this book is quoted in the Polynesian volume of this work, the following is pertinent about Lehi's travels:

[pp. 291-295] The people of the old patriarch Lehi's time, fleeing from the destruction of Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C., crossed the waters of the Pacific Ocean on flat-bottomed barges or rafts. . . .

[They] started the migration across the desert waters to the shores of the Indian Ocean. There they embarked on the voyage which carried them through the Indian Ocean, the China Sea, the Pacific Ocean, and landed them almost a year later on the shores of Central America.

The evidence to support such a claim has compounded year by year; new evidences are being brought forth continually as archaeologists uncover more and more of the cities and belongings of the ancient peoples of America, and as scientists rediscover old truths from their records. . . .

[1960 Illustrated Model Joseph E. Vincent LIMITED MESOAMERICA]

L.S.=Southern & eastern Mesoamerica / N.N.=Isth. of Tehuan. / L.N.=N. of Isth. of Tehuan. to just beyond Valley of Mexico / H.C.=Valley of Mexico / Sid. R.=Unclear (Grijalva or Usumacinta)

Source: Joseph E. Vincent, *Book of Mormon Lands*, Mentone, California, 1960. Also "Some Views on Book of Mormon Geography," *Papers of the Fourteenth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures*, edited by Forrest R. Hauck, pp. 61-69, BYU Dept. of Extension Publications: Provo, Utah, 1963.

[1960 Theoretical Map Bruce Warren LIMITED MESOAMERICAN

Note* Warren begins formulating maps which would eventually culminate in the published map appearing in his 1987 publication. (see 1987)

[1961^ Jose O Davila](#)

"An Account of our Book of Mormon Lands Tour, Jan. 27th to Feb. 16th, 1961." 48 pages, (BYU Library)

Davila leads people around to various sites in a less-than-luxury tour. He has Nephi landing at the mouth of the Nahuatl River on the Pacific coast of Guatemala. The land of Nephi was in highland Guatemala, and the city of Nephi was at Nahuala, Guatemala. The Sidon River was the Usumacinta River with the land of Zarahemla in the Usumacinta river basin. The narrow neck of land was the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The Hill Cumorah is not identified.

[1961^ Ariel L. Crowley](#)

About The Book of Mormon, U.S.A.: Deseret News Press, 1961

Chapter VI, "Lehi's River Laman" is a reprint of an article that Ariel Crowley wrote for the Improvement Era in January, 1944 in which he proposed the location of the Valley of Lemuel and River Laman as being in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. (see the 1944 notation). Chapter VII, "The Direction of Lehi's Travel" is a continuation of Crowley's ideas relative to the direction of Lehi's travels to Bountiful. Starting on page 74 he writes:

This is a commentary on 1 Nephi 16:13, where the first compass directions appear in the Book of Mormon.

It is there said that the journey from the encampment on the river Laman proceeded "across the river Laman" in a nearly south-southeast direction.

In these words there is much hidden significance. The first camp on the bank of the river Laman had to

be on the west side. As demonstrated in the preceding chapter, the river ran into the Great Bitter Lake and thence by shoals to the Red Sea. An examination of the topography of the country shows why the camp was on the west side and why the departure was in a nearly south-southeast direction.

The reasons are simple: On the east side the river ran right against the base of a lofty bluff extending for miles and rising 300 feet in height. On the west, the ground was the valley bottom of the Valley called Lemuel by Lehi (1 Nephi 2:10), a low shore, flat and eminently suitable for camping. It is so to this day, and clearly shown in the photographs made by Sir William Flinders Petrie for his Researches in Sinai .

It follows that when the Lehiite migrants first reached the river, they crossed over the shallows and camped on the flat. When they left, they moved in the direction required to take them past the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba (which is the easterly arm of the Red Sea's parent body), but keeping in the "more fertile parts of the borders 'near the Red Sea'" (1 Nephi 16:14)

It is evident that the group departed from the seacoast shortly after the "four days" (16:13) because they came into a barren country where food was scarce (16:17-19).

The journey continued in about the same direction (16:33) for many days, finally turning in an easterly direction (17:1) the whole journey occupying eight years (17:4). The sea which they called Irreantum (17:5) could not have been the Red Sea, which they had previously known and called by that name. Between the compass directions given, the nature of the country traversed, and the new name given to the sea, the "bountiful" nature of the country into which they ultimately came (17:45) and the presence of timber from which to construct a ship, with a mountain near at hand (17:7) bearing iron or other ore from which tools might be made (17:9-10), it is not very difficult to identify the place to which they went and the route traversed.

The obvious and only available place answering the Book of Mormon description is Arabia Felix. This conclusion is necessitated by the land itself. The interior of southeastern Arabia is the trackless waste of the Rub' al Khalil, the most terrible desert in the world, across which there is no road or path, and which no one has ever been known to cross by animal and live.

But a south-southeast direction, followed for a long time, with an easterly turn at the end of the trip, is an exact description of the way paralleling the east side of the Red Sea and coming ultimately into the fertile Yemen and what is now the Aden Protectorate.

This is the description of the land from the Encyclopedia Britannica:

The jebel or mountain land is, however, the typical Yemen, the Arabia Felix of ancients. Deep valleys winding through barren foothills lead gradually up to the higher mountains, and as the track ascends the scenery and vegetation change their character; the trees which line the banks of the wadis are overgrown with creepers and the running stream is dammed at frequent intervals.

The lower valley produce dates in abundance and at higher elevations wheat, barley, millets and excellent fruit are grown, while juniper forests cover the mountain slopes.

The mountains themselves are of variant stone, ranging from volcanic to limestone and granite. It was the suitable point for the Lord to tell Nephi, as He did, "whither I should go to find ore that I might make tools."

[1962 Grace J. Fenn](#)

As I See It: My Geography of the Book of Mormon, as Gleaned from Its Reading, n.p., 1962.

Selects numerous Book of Mormon geographical sites and locates the places on a map. Various notes and opinions on the Book of Mormon are included.

Source: Brian Dickman, in Donald W. Parry, Jeanette W. Miller, Sandra A. Thorne, A Comprehensive Annotated Book of Mormon Bibliography. Provo, UT: Research Press, 1996, p. 146.

[1963?^](#) [C. Stuart Bagley](#)

"A New Approach to the Problem of Geography of the Book of Mormon" Unpublished Manuscript, abt. 1963?, pp. 70-72, 76

Bagley writes from a limited Mesoamerican perspective concerning Lehi's landing site:

Serious students of the Book of Mormon would like to know where Lehi landed, where these people planted their seeds that grew so well, where they found the beasts described, and the gold, silver and copper. For many years the consensus was that they landed on the Chilean coast near Valparaiso, but more recent investigations have indicated a site much farther northward. Some students credit the possibility of a landing as far north as California, and some even believe the ship sailed around Africa from Arabia and across the Atlantic. It seems that evidence of any landing place suggested thus far must be considered inconclusive. This is fortunate for our study because it permits an unfettered approach. . . .

Among important clues are coastal areas most likely to receive wreckage from transpacific shores. Japanese and Chinese rafts have landed on the California coast in recent and probably former times. True, the equatorial currents flow westward, but a high velocity countercurrent, aided by prevailing winds, consistently deposits flotsam between Colombia and Lower California from the islands of the East Indies. Somewhere along this coast the Nephite landing may have taken place.

The existence of favorable ocean currents and winds is not the only reason to believe the landing was on Central American shores. Lehi's company had some control of their vessel and could navigate according to the special compass they carried with them. (See 1 Nephi 18:21-22) . . . The journey through the Arabian Desert had brought them into lower latitudes than they were accustomed to, and north circumpolar stars would appear lower as they went farther south. This phenomenon was probably not strange to Lehi: "He having been taught in the language of the Egyptians," (Mosiah 1:4) would recognize the appearance of new stars on the southern horizon and the disappearance of familiar northern stars as perfectly natural. As they approached the shores of the promised land, they might think it a good omen to see familiar stars rising higher and closer to the positions in which they had known them to be in Jerusalem. If these people came close to or crossed the equator, quite unfamiliar stars would appear in the southern sky at the same time that the "friendly" pole star would disappear altogether. This might be looked upon as indicated God's displeasure. Polaris or the Pole Star seems to stand still as the earth rotates. There is no corresponding south pole star that can be readily seen with the naked eye. . . .

The equatorial countercurrent flows easterly from the East Indies and is strongest between 5 degrees and 10 degrees north latitude. In the vicinity of 95 degrees west longitude it divides. One part goes southeast toward the coast of Peru to dissipate in the cool Humboldt Current. The other branch bends northward to lose itself in the California Current and eventually become a part of the North Equatorial Current through which it returns to the place of its origin. If it is assumed that this current played an important part in bringing the Nephites to America, we should expect the landing place to be somewhere between Peru and Lower California. If it is further assumed that these people could choose their direction, it is more probable that they would seek northern latitudes. Consequently the most likely place to look for the landing place is north of Panama. This viewpoint is supported by J. A. and J. N. Washburn, who write: "The Nephites might have crossed with this current (equatorial countercurrent) in which case they could have landed in Central America. There is a very good reason to believe that they did land there." [see the notation for]

Many places along the Pacific Coast of Central America, between the Isthmus of Panama and the

Isthmus of Tehuantepec, satisfy the meager description given in the Book of Mormon. Abundant rainfall, luxuriant forests, profuse wildlife, gold and other ores: all are found in this coastal area. . . . A more specific location can be assumed along the southern coast of Chiapas or Guatemala.

Note* This could be part of the Charles Stuart Bagley Manuscript of 1985 (see notation)

[1963 Map: Basic Pattern of Congruity of the Geography of the Book of Mormon. C. S. Bagley, "A New Approach to the Problem of Geography of the Book of Mormon," Unpublished Manuscript, abt. 1963?]

[1964 Noel B. Pratt](#) (Apostate)

The American Indian Bible, The First Book of Nephi I: Book No. 1 of a Series. Edited, Arranged, and Interpreted by Noel B. Pratt. Published for The Interchange Society, Alexandria, Virginia, April, 1964.

Preface

This first book of Nephi I tells the story of how a humble man of the tribe of Joseph left Jerusalem around 600 BC and traveled to the Persian Gulf. There his sons, one of whom was named Nephi, built a ship. In it they sailed to America, there to become the first American ancestors of the people now known as the American Indians. . . .

The First Book of Nephi I [1-22]

237. We lived for eight years in the wilderness, before we came to a land which we called Bountiful, because of its much fruit and wild honey. And there we beheld the sea (persian Gulf). . . .

285. After many days we arrived at the promised land. We went forth upon the land and pitched our tents. And we called it The Promised Land (the eastern shore of the USA - probably Virginia).

[1964 Gordon H. Fraser](#) (anti-Mormon)

What Does the Book of Mormon Teach? An Examination of the Historical and Scientific Statements of the Book of Mormon, Chicago: Moody, 1964, p. 37

See the 2003 FARMS article.

[1966 Illustrated Model V. Garth Norman LIMITED MESOAMERICA]

L.S.=Mesoamerican S. of Isth of Tehuan. / N.N.=Isth. of Tehuan. / L.N.=N. of Isth of Tehuan. / H.C. southern Tamaulipas state / Sid. R.=Usumacinta

Source: V. Garth Norman, "Book of Mormon Geography Study on the Narrow Neck of Land Region" Book of Mormon Geography Working Paper No. 1, St. Michaels, Ariz., 1966, 1972, 1974. Also "Reconstruction and Correlation of the Geography of the Land Southward, Border Regions of the Book of Mormon" Book of Mormon Geography Working Paper No. 2, St. Michaels, Arizona, 1966, 1974, 1975.

[1966^ John D. Hawks](#)

Book of Mormon Digest, Salt Lake City: Hawkes Publishing Inc.

In 1966, John Hawks would put out a 4-Hour Book of Mormon Digest designed to very succinctly tell the

Book of Mormon story so that people could remember the basic facts. The perspective was internal. However, the book was improved and revised in 1970. As part of this improvement, two maps (see below) were copied from Hugh Nibley's 1952-53 series of articles in the Improvement Era entitled "Lehi in the Desert."

[1970 Map: Journey from Jerusalem. Artist: Pat Denner. John D. Hawks, *Book of Mormon Digest*, Salt Lake City: Hawkes Publishing Inc., 1970, p. 24.]

[1970 Map: Journey to Promised Land. Artist: Pat Denner. John D. Hawks, *Book of Mormon Digest*, Salt Lake City: Hawkes Publishing Inc., 1970, p. 25.]

[1968^](#) [J. N. Washburn](#)

Book-of-Mormon Guidebook: Where They Went and How They Got There--with Sundry Related Matters, J. N. Washburn, 1968, pp. 28-32

The basic approach of this book is internal, and so from that perspective, Lehi's journey through Arabia is reviewed with scriptural notations. The following comments, however are worthy of note:

The Journey: The course of the journey of the original Nephite colony in the old world is explicit. Whether Joseph Smith, an unlettered farmer of twenty-four, knew his geography, he was sound in the route taken by this people. The interested student or teacher could do well at this point to read from a reputable book something about Arabia and its inhabitants. [p. 28]

WE do not, as with the Jaredites, have any information at all as to the ship built under Nephi's direction. . . . At any rate, the ship was finally finished, and the group embarked. (1 Nephi 18:5-6)

Nor do we have anything like the clear-cut picture of winds and ocean currents that we have with the Jaredites, the reason being that the part of the world traversed by the Nephites is entirely different. There is here no prevailing pattern of winds and ocean currents, owing to a number of facts. One is that it is nearer the equator where heat plays a big part in the pressures that cause winds and ocean currents. . . . The Nephites, one the other hand sailed into an almost-land-locked sea, a sort of after-though of the greater ocean. Their route, let it be what or where it was, was interrupted by islands and continental coastlines, all of which are reflected in the currents. A map of the world's ocean currents shows the water going every which way, sometimes actually meeting itself coming in the opposite direction. To mention but a few land masses to be contended with, there are Malagasy, the Philippines, Sumatra, Singapore, the Celebes, New Guinea, the island continent of Australia, and New Zealand, to say nothing of the islands of the South Pacific. This is to say that no matter where the Nephites sailed, they had difficulties. It is almost certain that at least once they moved from one current system to another before their way became established. . . . [pp. 30-31]

Where Did the Nephites Land? Possibly no other aspect of Book-of-Mormon study, aside from doctrine, has received greater attention through the years than that of where the Nephites reached the new world. Again, as with the Jaredites, there has been, or was, for many years a settled view regarding this. Let us consider it for a few moments.

As I understand it, the Compendium of 1856 [sic], published in Salt Lake city, by Messrs. Richards and Little, contained a statement about as follows. During a session of the School of the Prophets, the prophet Joseph dictated to the secretary, Frederick G. Williams, a recent revelation. Then there was a line across

the page, indicating transition or a shift of material. Then this appears: "Now concerning the travels of the Nephites . . ." The statement then went on to say that Lehi and his people landed at thirty degrees south latitude, near what is now Valparaiso, Chile. This too was assumed to have been a revelation.

Richards and Little did not include this in succeeding editions, the speculation being that the prophet was expressing an opinion rather than dictating a revelation. Since this is so close to us all, I shall say something about it at a later time.

As in the case of the Jaredites again, my father and I reached a greatly different conclusion from a careful reading of the text. Nor were we the first to follow this line of thought. A little publication, "The Palestine of Ancient America," had already expressed it. . . . The situation is different from that of the Jaredites again in that we know which side of the American continent the Nephites reached. (Alma 22:28) There has never been any controversy on this point as there has been in the case of the Jaredites. . . . [pp. 31-32]

[1968^](#) [Sidney B. Sperry](#)

Book of Mormon Compendium, SLC: Bookcraft, 1968, pp. 97-99, 123-124, 126

In 1968 the former Dean of Religious Studies at Brigham Young University, Dr. Sidney Sperry would publish a thorough commentary on many aspects of the Book of Mormon. At least one chapter is devoted to each book of the Book of Mormon, plus chapters on special topics. Sperry says the following regarding Lehi's travels to the promised land:

[Lehi] departed with his family into the wilderness and encamped in a valley by the mouth of a river which emptied into the Red Sea. We are told that they took nothing with them except provisions and tents. It may reasonably be assumed that they rode on beasts of burden such as asses and camels, but nowhere in Nephi's record is anything said about their means of transportation. As a route to the Red Sea, they had two choices: they could go either directly south of Jerusalem by the road through Hebron and Beersheba and thence through the great wilderness to the northern tip of what is now the Gulf of Aqaba, or they could go directly east across the Jordan until they struck the ancient "King's Highway" and then proceed south, or nearly so, until the Gulf of Aqaba was reached. Lehi probably used the western route. It should be remembered that the Gulf of Aqaba, which is approximately one hundred miles long and fifteen wide, was anciently regarded as part of the Red Sea. . . .

The journey from Jerusalem to the Red Sea could well have occupied ten or twelve days' time, if we assume that Lehi and his party rode on camels and spent little time resting by the way. It is interesting to observe here that the Great American explorer of Palestine, Dr. Edward Robinson, travelling by camel and taking the western route in the opposite direction, occupied nine days in making the journey. He left 'Akabah, a station not far from the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba, on the afternoon of Thursday, April 5, 1838, and arrived in Jerusalem at 6 P.M., Saturday, April 14th. (Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, 1:255-325) This distance as the crow flies is approximately 155 miles.

Nephi indicates that once having reached the wilderness near the Red Sea, his father traveled three more days in the wilderness before encamping in the place mentioned above--that is, in a valley by the mouth of a river which emptied into the Red Sea (2:5-8). . . .

There are two places we know of, either one of which might well correspond to the description given of Lehi's encampment. [1] The first is a place called Maqna or Mukna, about seventy miles down the east coast of the Gulf of Aqaba; [2] the second is east of the mouth of the gulf, at a place called Ainunah. Ainunah is also about one hundred miles in a direct line south and east of the northern tip of the gulf. It is almost directly south of a mountain known as Jebel Ainunah (Spring Mountain. Maqna would be my choice, if one had to be made, of the most likely spot where Lehi's family encamped. . . .

The Lord now commanded Lehi to depart from the camp in the valley of Lemuel on the border of the Red Sea, cross the river Laman, and journey into the wilderness (16:9-12). . . . The little party, provided with seeds and provisions, set forth into the wilderness with their tents and traveled four days in a nearly south-southeast direction until they came to a place they called Shazer (Heb. to spin, to twist; 16:11-14).

After slaying game for food with their bows and arrows, they continued their journey in the same general direction near the fertile parts of the wilderness by the borders of the Red Sea. After many days of travel, during which time they slew wild animals to provide themselves with food, they finally pitched their tents again. . . . It was at this point in their journey that Nephi broke his fine steel bow, and the bows of his brethren lost their springs (16:18, 21). . . .

The little party again journeyed in the same general direction and finally pitched their tents in a place called Nahom (Heb. growl, groan) It was here that Ishmael died and was buried (16:33-34). . . .

The Nephites now took up their desert journey again and struck out in a nearly eastward direction. . . .

I think it highly probable that their seashore habitat was on the eastern side of the Arabian Peninsula, possibly in the Oman or Hadramaut region. . . . [pp. 123-124]

Questions are often asked concerning the place of their landing [in the New World]. In the Times and Seasons, printed apparently with the Prophet Joseph Smith's full knowledge and blessing, occurs this explanation:

Lehi went down by the Red Sea to the great southern ocean, and landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien, and improved the country. . . (vol. 3, No. 22, Sept 15, 1842) [p. 126]

Note* Although Hugh Nibley made the first general speculative location for the valley of Lemuel ("the Gulf of 'Aqaba at a point not far above the Straits of Tiran. When Lehi beheld the view, perhaps [it was]from the sides of Mt. Musafa or Mt. Mendisha. The river would flow between these two elevations, as indicated on maps of the area. . . ." p. 98) see the 1952 notation), Sperry becomes the first author to specifically pinpoint his choices of either Maqna or Ainunah.

Note* It is interesting that almost in an opposite approach to Daniel Ludlow (see the 1968 notation) as to authoritative statements regarding Lehi's travels, Sperry fails to mention the "Lehi's Travels" statement which notes that Lehi turned eastward at the nineteenth parallel. Moreover he does note the 1842 Times and Seasons article in which Lehi was said to have landed "a little south of the Isthmus of Darien."

[1968^ Daniel Ludlow](#)

A Companion To Your Study Of The Book of Mormon, Daniel H. Ludlow, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1968, pp. 3, 4

Starting in 1968, this softbound book began to be used for Religion 121, 122, 421, and 422 at B.Y.U. This was carefully prepared by Daniel Ludlow to avoid the subject of geography in the New World. However, some commentary was made involving Lehi's journey through Arabia. Ludlow seems to be the first author to address the "three days' journey" printed in the superscription to the First Book of Nephi. Also interesting is his quote of the Frederick G. Williams information regarding Lehi's travels through Arabia (Richards & Little "Compendium, 1925 edition), which is cut off before the mention of Lehi's landing in Chile. However, when the reader comes to commentary on the location of Lehi's landing (1 Nephi 18:23), which constitutes the last part of the "Lehi's Travels" quote of Frederick G. Williams, there is nothing said. The last part of the "Lehi's Travels" statement is as follows: "then [they] sailed in a southeast direction, and

landed on the continent of South America, in Chile, thirty degrees south latitude."

No maps are included in the commentary. (An internal map was apparently drawn by Ludlow in 1964. This map would later be published in the CES manual for Religion 121 & 122 for 1989 (see the 1989 notation). Ludlow's book would be formally published in hardbound copy in 1976 (see the 1976 notation). The following are all the commentaries regarding Lehi's travels:

1 Nephi 2:2-6; 9:1--The Distance between Jerusalem and the Valley of Lemuel.

The exact distance of the Valley of Lemuel from Jerusalem is not made clear in the Book of Mormon. The superscription to the First Book of Nephi (wherein Nephi states that Lehi "taketh three days' journey into the wilderness with his family" from the land of Jerusalem) seems to indicate a distance between the two locations which can be covered in a three-days' journey. However, some students of the Book of Mormon interpret 1 Nephi 2:4-6 to mean that Lehi and his group traveled an indefinite number of days until they arrived "in the wilderness in the borders which are nearer the Red Sea"; then they traveled through that wilderness for three days to the Valley of Lemuel.

1 Nephi 2:4--Possible Meaning of the Word "Wilderness"

The word wilderness seems to be used in the Book of Mormon to refer to an uninhabited area or at least to an area only sparsely settled. Thus "wilderness" could either refer to a desert area (as it apparently does in 1 Nephi 2:4) or to a fertile area about one that is relatively uninhabited (as in 1 Nephi 18:6, 24-25 and 2 Nephi 5:7).

1 Nephi 2:4-6; 16:9-14, 33-34; 17:1-6--The Travels of Lehi's Colony in the Wilderness

The exact route followed by Lehi and his colony as they fled from Jerusalem is not given in the Book of Mormon. However, the general direction of their travel is given in the references listed above. Evidently Lehi's colony first traveled south from Jerusalem until they met the Red Sea (1 Nephi 2:4-6), then south-southeast until after they had stayed at Shazer and Nahom (1 Nephi 16:9-14, 33-34), and then "nearly eastward from that time forth" until they arrived at the sea (1 Nephi 17:1-6).

The following statement, if true, would throw additional light on the possible route of Lehi's colony, but the authenticity of this statement has not been completely substantiated:

Lehi's Travels.--Revelation to Joseph the Seer. The course that Lehi and his company traveled from Jerusalem to the place of their destination:

They traveled nearly a south-southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude; then, nearly east to the Sea of Arabia. . . . (Franklin D. Richards and Elder James A. Little, A Compendium of the Doctrines of the Gospel, 1925 edition, p. 272.)

Note* Compare Ludlow's selective approach to Lehi's travels and Book of Mormon geography with the CES Student Manual 121, 122 published in 1979.

1969 F. Edward Buterworth

The Sword of Laban. Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1969.

The Sword of Laban is a real-life adventure story set in the lands of Jerusalem, Arabia, Babylon, and Ancient America. Although the story-text is basically internal, there is a map of Lehi's journey in the front of the book.

[1969 The approximate route of Lehi and his colony. F. Edward Buterworth, *The Sword of Laban. Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1969, front.*]

[1969 Illustrated Model Keith Christensen LIMITED MESOAMERICA]

L.S. = Central South America / N.N. = 210 miles across south yucatan Peninsula / L.N. = Yucatan Peninsula / H.C. = Not indicated, but Yucatan or Belize is implied / Sidon = Ulua River

Source: Keith Christiansen [sic], "Southern Yucatan Theory," 1969, Unpublished paper in the possession of Paul R. Cheesman (cited in Cheesman, *These Early Americans*, SLC: Deseret Book, 1974). See also Paul R. Cheesman, *The World of the Book of Mormon*, SLC: Deseret Book, 1978, p. 3, in which points from "Keith Christensen, unpublished paper" are cited and summarized.

1970^ Walter M. Stout

The Book of Mormon Practical Geography, Upland, CA: n.p., 1970.

This 64-page paper attempts to correlate the lands of the Book of Mormon with Costa Rica and Nicaragua. It references comments on geographical "treks" or movements with the scriptural chapters and verses in a chronological sequence. There is, however, no commentary on Lehi's travels from Jerusalem to the promised land, only a designation on the maps that he landed in the southern part of Costa Rica on the Pacific coast. The maps do not add any more detail regarding Lehi's landing site.

Note* See the other Stout notations and maps for 1950, 1972.

1970 Milton R. Hunter

Great Civilizations and the Book of Mormon, SLC: Bookcraft, 1970.

Deals with the Olmec civilization, Indian culture, the Maya civilization, Tikal, Copan, Uxmal, Kabah, Chichen Itza, Teotihuacan, and the origin of American Indians.

Source: Russell H. Ball, in Donald W. Parry, Jeanette W. Miller, Sandra A. Thorne, *A Comprehensive Annotated Book of Mormon Bibliography*. Provo, UT: Research Press, 1996, p. 216.

[1970's Illustrated Model Gareth W. Lowe LIMITED MESOAMERICA]

L.S.=Central Chiapas, Honduras, El Salvador / N.N.=Pacific coastal lowland strip around Tonalá, Chiapas / L.N.=Tonalá northward through Isth. of Tehuán. & beyond / H.C.=Tuxtla Mountains / Sid. R.=Grijalva

Source: Personal communication to John L. Sorenson, exact date unrecoverable but probably early in the 1970's

1970^ College of Religious Instruction

A Syllabus for Religion 121 and 122: "An Introduction to the Book of Mormon and Its Teachings." Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1970

On pages 71-72 we find the following:

The group travelled south into the wilderness adjacent to the Red Sea. . . . Traveling south-southeast from their first encampment, the group was then led eastward to the seashore, where the Lord commanded Nephi to build a sea-worthy ship. . . . After a near tragic journey where rebellion was again

obvious, the vessel arrived in the "promised land" at a location unknown to us today.

[1971^](#) [W. Cleon Skousen](#)

Treasures from the Book of Mormon, vol. 1, Salt Lake City, 1971. Reprinted in 1974, pp. 1029-1158.

On the subject of Lehi's travels to the promised land, Skousen quotes liberally from Hugh Nibley (Lehi in the Desert, 1952; An Approach to the Book of Mormon, 1957). He also adds some comments by Sperry (Compendium, 1968) and Reynolds and Sjodahl (Book of Mormon Geography, 1957) and Leon Dalton ("Routes to the Promised Land," Liahona Elders Journal, August 8, 1944). The only thing new appears in his 1974 reprint. Skousen includes a write-up and the transcript of a 1974 video entitled "The Beith Lehi Cave" (see the notation for 1974) which was brought to Salt lake City and shown by Dr. Joseph Ginat, an administrative assistant to the minister of Arab affairs of Israel. This video connects a recently discovered cave in Israel with the cave where Nephi and his brothers hid to escape Laban's guards.

Skousen writes:

The record says he [Lehi] departed into the wilderness. We should say just a word about the use of the word, "wilderness," It is used over 230 times in the Book of Mormon and refers to any wild, uninhabited region. Sometimes it is the desert as used here; sometimes it is an uninhabited fertile region (1 Nephi 18:6); sometimes it is a region of great forests filled with wild animals (1 Nephi 18:25); sometimes it refers to high mountains from which a great river has its headwaters (Alma 43:22). In this verse we are now studying, the word "wilderness" refers to the Negev, or desert country of southern Palestine, which leads down toward the Red Sea. In tearing up the roots of a lifetime, Lehi and his family left their house and the land of their inheritance. The "house" was in Jerusalem (1 Nephi 1:7) the family estate or land of inheritance was "down" from Jerusalem, probably in one of the rich valleys leading up to the north-south range of mountains on which Jerusalem is located. (see 1 Nephi 3:16, 22.) The capital of Judah was built on Mount Moriah, 3,000 feet above sea level where various valleys flow "down" from it on both the east and west sides. No doubt Lehi's estate or "land of Inheritance" was located in one of these and was therefore a few miles distance from Jerusalem. (p. 1029)

On this trek the first identified point of geography appearing in the text was when they arrived in the borders of the Red Sea. this body of water has two horns or gulfs extending northward. One is the Gulf of Suez and the other is the Gulf of Aqaba. We know from subsequent events that Lehi's caravan reached the tip of Aqaba, probably at Elath (or Elat), the main naval port for Solomon's navy 350 years earlier, and the main port of Israel today. This journey from Jerusalem to the Aqaba Gulf would have taken from 9 to 12 days by camel caravan. The route is 155 miles as the crow flies; but when Dr. Edward Robinson used camels to travel from Elath to Jerusalem in 1838, the best time he could make was 9 days. (Sperry, Book of Mormon Compendium, p. 98) Having reached the Gulf of Aqaba, this verse says they continued to travel in the wilderness along the borders near the Red Sea. this would mean they were traveling along the eastern shore of the gulf of Aqaba (Nibley, Lehi in the Desert, pp. 54-56). [p. 1030]

[1971 [Map: The 2,500 Mile Trek through the Wilderness by Lehi and His Colony.](#) [W. Cleon Skousen,](#) [Treasures from the Book of Mormon, vol. 1, Salt Lake City, 1971. Reprinted in 1974, p. 1028\]](#)

When Lehi and his family had traveled three days in the wilderness (along the Red Sea) they came to a valley through which ran a river. Two possible sites have been located which fit the description of this place. The first is called Maqna or Mukna. It is located about 70 miles south of Elath (at the northern tip of

the Aqaba gulf), and the other site is called Ainunah and is located 100 miles south of Elath. Dr. Sidney B. Sperry feels Maqna is the more likely spot and this writer concurs (see Sperry, Book of Mormon Compendium, p. 98). [p. 1031]

The distance back to Jerusalem was considerable. If we assume that Lehi's campsite was at Maqna or Mukna (See Sperry, book of Mormon Compendium, p. 98), then the distance back to Jerusalem would be 225 miles as the crow flies and certainly much longer by camel caravan. The journey at a very minimum would have required from two to three weeks. (p. 1037)

[On pages 1056-1058 the Lehi Cave is discussed--see the notation for 1974 for the full text]

Nephi says they traveled for a period of four days in a south-southeast direction and then pitched their tents in a place which they called Shazer. Dr. Nibley has the following to say concerning this place . . . (see Lehi in the Desert, p. 90).

This rugged little colony of immigrants did not know it, but they were launching upon an overland trip of 2,500 miles which would take them 8 years! Thereafter, they would travel by boat half-way around the world. But at the present moment the problem was food, particularly meat. Note the way Nephi says, "we did . . . go forth into the wilderness to slay food." . . . Nephi says they went forth into the wilderness again following the same direction (south-southeast, verse 13). They deliberately followed the more fertile parts of the desert region which were along the borders near the Red Sea.

Nephi says they continued their travel for many days . . . By this time the party was several hundred miles down the east coast of the Red Sea. Nephi gives us the impression that they were traveling at a breathless pace. Notice his statement that they traveled for many days and then pitched their tents for a period of time in order that they might rest themselves and obtain food for their families. . . . But at this place a near disaster occurred which could have led to the death of the entire company from starvation. . . . Nephi says he did break his bow which was made of fine steel." [pp. 1133-1134]

Nephi went to work. He launched a search for some kind of wood out of which he might construct a bow. Finally he succeeded and Dr. Nibley says this was a miracle in itself. He points out that "According to the ancient Arab writers, the only bow-wood obtainable in all Arabia was the nabwood that grew only 'amid the inaccessible and overhanging crags of Mount Jasum and Mount Azd, which are situated in the very region where, if we follow the Book of Mormon, the broken bow incident occurred. (Lehi in the Desert, p. 68) [p. 1136]

There is some basis for believing that Lehi's colony was near the mountains adjacent to modern Medina which was the residence of Mohammed for a period of time in the seventh century A.D. . . . In western Arabia the mountains are not sand but rock, and Burkhard . . . reports that 'in these mountains between Medina and the sea, all the way northward (this is bound to include Lehi's area) mountain goats are met, and the leopard are not uncommon.'" (Lehi in the Desert, p. 67) [p. 1137]

Having regained their strength, the colony set out once more, traveling nearly the same course as they had from the beginning. After they had traveled many days they finally pitched their tents in a place where they felt they could tarry for a "space of time." The company did not realize that this was as far south as they were going to go along the shore of the Red Sea.

The company may not have realized that they were also going to lose one of their great patriarchal leaders. It was here that Ishmael died and was buried in this place which the party called Nahom. . . . Dr. Nibley states: "Note that this is not 'a place which we called Nahom,' but the place which was so called, a desert burial ground, Jaussen reports . . . that though Bedouins sometimes bury the dead where they die,

many carry the remains great distances to bury them. The Arabic root, NHM (vowels must be supplied) has the basic meaning of 'to sigh or moan,' and occurs nearly always in the third form, 'to sigh or moan with another' (Lehi in the Desert, pp. 90-91) [pp. 1137-1138]

Up to this time the company had been traveling south by southeast (1 Nephi 16:13-14) and more or less paralleling the Red Sea. Suddenly the pointers of the Liahona veered off nearly 90 degrees and headed them straight into the depths of the Arabian desert. From this point on they traveled nearly eastward.

In order to fix the approximate place along the Red sea from which the Lehi colony turned eastward, we have to examine their point of destination which Nephi describes in considerable detail. As we shall see in a moment, their destination was such an unusual place that students have thought it might be possible to locate it today. Dr. Nibley feels that this had been done. He says: "After traveling a vast distance in a south south-easterly direction (16:14, 33), the party struck off almost due eastward through the worst desert of all, where they 'did wade through much affliction,' to emerge in a state of almost complete exhaustion into a totally unexpected paradise by the sea. There is such a paradise in the Qara mountains on the southern coast of Arabia. to reach it by moving 'nearly eastward' (17:1) from the Red Sea coast, one would have to turn east on the nineteenth parallel." (Lehi in the Desert, p. 124) [p. 1141]

If Joseph Smith had been writing the Book of Mormon on his own, he certainly would not have described this part of Arabia as a desert wilderness. the consensus in his day was that the center of the Arabian peninsula was a broad vista of lovely trees and beautiful lakes--abounding in game. The most popular guide book of that period gave this erroneous description for the interior of Arabia and then said the coastline was "a rock wall . . . as dismal and barren as can be; not a blade of grass or a green thing," can be found. (See the Modern Traveller Series, Long, 1825, pp. 14f, 9348f.) When modern explorers finally charted the interior of Arabia they found it to be just opposite from the 1825 guidebook, but exactly the way the Book of Mormon had described it. And, as we shall see in a moment, the guidebook was equally wrong on its description of the coastline (see Nibley, Lehi in the Desert, p. 127) [p. 1142]

Dr. Nibley points out that the route through south Arabia was the safest and most direct route they could have taken in those days if they were to reach the fertile Qara Mountains on the Arabian coast. He challenges critics to suggest a better one. . . . The party had traversed the entire Arabian peninsula and arrived at the seashore. They were looking at the vast open reaches of the Arabian Ocean with the Indian Ocean further south. They called the sea Irreantum which means many waters. [p. 1143]

Concerning the "land Bountiful," Dr. Nibley has this to say: "Of the Qara Mountains which lie in that limited sector of the coast of south Arabia which Lehi must have reached if he turned east at the nineteenth parallel, Bertram Thomas, one of the few Europeans who has ever seen them, writes:

What a glorious place! Mountains three thousand feet high basking above a tropical ocean, their seaward slopes velvety with waving jungle, their roofs fragrant with rolling yellow meadows, beyond which the mountains slope northwards to a red sandstone steppe. . . . Great was my delight when in 1928 I suddenly came upon it all from out of the arid wastes of the southern borderlands. . . .

"Captain Thomas (whom Lowell Thomas calls 'the greatest living explorer') goes on to describe the aromatic shrubs of the place, the wooded valleys, 'the hazy rim of the distant sea lifted beyond the mountains rolling down to it,' and the wonderous beauty of the 'sylvan scenes' that opened to the view as he passed down through the lush forests to the sea.

Compare this with Nephi's picture . . . It is virtually the same scene . . . (Lehi in the Desert, pp. 126-127) [p. 1143]

By 600 B.C. both the Egyptians and the Phoenicians had developed advanced ocean-sailing ships. Both nations succeeded in sailing clear around the continent of Africa about this time (Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, p. 35), but the Lord was not satisfied with anything men had constructed. He gave Nephi a new, divine design. [p. 1152]

When all of the prepared provisions were stowed away, and all of the colony were safely aboard, this wonderful new ship was launched out into the sea. Nephi says that it was driven forth before the winds toward the promised land. In verses 132 and 22 we have an indication that the ship was guided by a rudder. . . . Then suddenly it is all over! In a single sentence Nephi wraps up one of the most fantastic voyages in all human history, second only to the voyage of Noah. He says that after many days they landed their ship and called it the promised land. [pp. 1154, 1156]

But the reader finds it impossible to make such a tremendous leap in the narrative without raising a multitude of question. No doubt many of the answers will be found on the large pates of Nephi (when they are revealed), but since no details are given or included in the small pates, we are left in a quandary on many points. For example, what route would they have taken? Leon C. Dalton dealt with this question in his "Routes To The Promised Land" which appeared in the *Liahona, The Elders Journal*, August 8, 1944. Beginning on page 102, he writes:

An examination of the pilot charts of the world reveals that if the Nephites embarked in late summer, after the harvest, they would have two or three months of northerly winds (winds out of the north) or about 100 days, and if they floated at the normal rate of from 3 to 5 miles per hour, they would reach a south latitude of about 40 degrees in that length of time, or slightly south of the line connecting Cape Town, South Africa and Melbourne, Australia. Here they would encounter the . . . 'Prevailing Westerlies,' (winds blowing west to east) as they would here enter the ocean currents that travel eastward around the globe the year around. These currents continue their eastward course until they encounter 56 degrees south latitude, where they split. Those south of 56 degrees continue on around the earth, while those striking the Chilean coast are deflected northward along the shoreline, turning seaward again at about 35 degrees south latitude during the warm months, but continuing northward to about 20 degrees during the winter . . . [see the 1944 notation for the text]

The next question is Where Did They Land? Here is the only documentation available so far: In the *Compendium* by James A. Little and Franklin D. Richards (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1912 edition, but copyright 1882) p. 289 it states:

Lehi's Travels--Revelation to Joseph the Seer: The course that Lehi and his company traveled from Jerusalem to the place of their destination: They traveled nearly a south southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude; then nearly east to the Sea of Arabia, then sailed in a southeast direction, and landed on the continent of South America, in Chile, thirty degrees south latitude.

But was this a revelation? Reynolds and Sjordahl have a note on this in their *Book of Mormon Geography*, p. 54:

In the library connected with the office of the Church Historian, Salt Lake City, there is a sheet of paper on which the statement is written that the landing was in 30 degrees south. That would be in Chile, about where the city of Coquimbo now is situated. The statement is handwritten by Frederick G. Williams, at one time counselor to the Prophet, and it is found on a sheet on which a revelation, Section 7 in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, also has been copied. That revelation was given in the year 1829. The presumption, therefore is that the lines relating to the landing of Lehi were also penned at an early date, and certainly before the year 1837, when Frederick G. Williams was removed from his position as counselor. If this is correct, the statement of Williams would undoubtedly reflect the views of the Prophet Joseph on that question.

Another note, also on page 54 states:

Orson Pratt held that view. In his Remarkable Visions, the first edition of which we understand was published in 1840, consequently some time before the martyrdom of the Prophet, he says that Lehi "landed upon the western coast of South America," and in 1874, when he was Church Historian, in an article written for an encyclopedia, he expressed the same thought more fully, stating that the landing took place "as is believed, not far from the 30th degree south latitude." (See Millennial Star, vol. 38, pp. 691-692.) The expression, "as is believed," we take to mean that Orson Pratt did not advance a theory of his own on the question, but stated what was held to be true among his associates, or some of them, as well as by himself.

It would seem, however, that the above information was recorded as an opinion rather than a revelation, since we have a contrary view expressed in the Times and Seasons, September 15, 1842 (Vol. 3:921-922). It is not certain just who wrote this article but it was written while the Prophet Joseph was alive and reading each Church publication rather carefully. It says:

". . . Lehi went down by the Red Sea to the great Southern Ocean, and crossed over to this land, and landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien, and improved the country."

This statement "a little south of the Isthmus of Darien" would put the landing somewhere in Columbia or Ecuador, but a considerable distance from Coquimbo, Chile, 30 degrees south latitude.

This rather leaves the question open for a more specific disclosure by the Lord sometime in the future. Under these circumstances, it was though best to set forth what is known so the reader would better appreciate what is not known. [pp. 1157-1158]

1971^ "Israel Cave, Mexican Plates Discussed at Meet." in Church News 41 (23 October 1971): p. 6

PROVO, UTAH

Significance of findings in an ancient cave 22 miles from Jerusalem was discussed by Joseph Ginat, a graduate in archaeology from the University of Jerusalem and a deputy adviser to Israel's prime minister, Mrs Golda Meir, Oct. 16 [1971] at Brigham Young University.

Mr. Ginat, who has been studying toward his doctorate at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, was one of nine speakers at the 21st Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures. The symposium is presented jointly by the Society for Early Historic Archaeology and the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology of BYU.

Mr. Ginat based his discussion on two articles concerning the cave, known as Khirbet Beit Lei (Lehi). The articles were written by Joseph Navah, Department of Antiquities, state of Israel, and by Frank Moore Cross Jr., associate professor of Old Testament at Harvard University, and an editor of the journal, Biblical Archaeologist.

Several ancient inscriptions in the old Hebrew script, and drawings of human figures and sailing vessels were found on the walls of the cave.

The drawings of the sailing vessels were of interest because of the great distance from the cave to the sea. Naveh, said Mr. Ginat, dates the Hebrew script to the 6th century, B.C.

Mr. Naveh claims the cave was a burial cave, but Mr. Cross disagrees, Mr. Ginat said. Mr. Cross said he would "suppress the temptation to suggest that the oracle and the petitions may have been the work of a prophet or his amanuensis fleeing Jerusalem." . . .

The Khirbet Beit Lei cave is in the same vicinity as the ancient place named by Samson in the book of

Judges as the Valley of Lehi.

"What of the name of this place? Khirbet Beit Lei. Lei and the name Lehi are equivalent. First mention of Lehi is in Judges 15: 14-17. In this reference, two places with the name Lehi are mentioned. The first is the place to which the men of Judah delivered Samson to the Philistines," said Mr. Ginat. . . .

Note* No direct connection is made in the above comments between the cave at Khirbet Beit Lei and the cave in which Nephi and his brethren hid from Laban. However see the 1974 notation.

[1972^](#) [Joseph Ginat](#)

"The Cave of Khirbet Beit Lehi," in Newsletter of the SEHA 129 (April 1972):1-5.

129.0 The Cave At Kirbet Beit Lei. By Joseph Ginat, deputy advisor on Arab affairs tot he prime minister of Israel, on leave of absence, 1970-72, and visiting instructor and doctoral candidate in anthropology at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City. A paper read at the Twenty-First Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures, held at Brigham Young University on October 16, 1971.

An ancient cave was uncovered in 1961, in the course of road construction on the eastern slope of the hill Khirbet Beit Lei, according to Joseph Naveh, professor of archaeology at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, who was the first explorer after the discovery. The cave is located five miles east of Lachish about 10 miles west-northwest of Hebron, and 22 miles south-southwest of Jerusalem. (Naveh, 1963)

On the walls inside the cave were found several ancient inscriptions in the Old Hebrew script and drawings of human figures and sailing vessels. . . . Naveh dates the Hebrew script to the sixth century BC by comparison with other inscriptions found on monuments and ostraca of the period.

In the present paper I shall discuss the content of the inscriptions, utilizing Naveh's original study, together with a later analysis (Cross, 1970) by Frank Moore Cross, Jr., professor of Hebrew at Harvard University . . .

[For a summary of what is discussed, see the Skousen 1974 notation]

. . . the name Khirbet Beit Lei means "ruin of the House of Lehi."

In my opinion, the cave was a place where refugees found shelter, as Cross suggests. Moreover, the inscriptions had nothing to do with the burials. It also seems logical, as Cross further suggests, that the writer was a prophet or his scribe. . . .

In the present case, the persons who stopped at the Khirbet Beit Lei cave may have been engaged in a dangerous mission in fulfillment of which they had to escape and find shelter. My hypothesis is supported by the human figures engraved on the wall . . .

In any case, if we add together the inscriptions, the praying figure, and the ships, the sum of them all indeed seems significant, especially in this particular cave, located down from Jerusalem and into the fields of the ancient House of Lehi (Lei).

Editor's Notes: The "land of our father [Lehi]'s inheritance," mentioned by the Prophet Nephi in the Book of Mormon, appears to have been a family estate somewhat removed from the city of Jerusalem itself. Students of the Book of Mormon should consider whether the Khirbet Beit Lei cave might have had some connection with this estate, which figured prominently in the family's departure from the Holy City in 597 BC, the four sons having hidden for a time "in the cavity of a rock." (1 Nephi 3:16, 27) . . .

[1972^](#)

(abt. Lehi Torrey)

"Mormon Adventurer Sets Voyage," *The Herald. Provo, Utah: Tuesday, May 2, 1972, p. 12*

ALAMEDA (UPI)--A 71-year old Mormon adventurer Monday began preparing a home-made Chinese junk for an attempt to trace the route of his namesake, the prophet Lehi, who is thought to have sailed from Asia to South America 2,500 years ago. . . .

"I'm a religious man," said Torrey, a retired marine biologist, "I have had this in mind for 40 years."

He said he will take the junk on a shakedown cruise to Guatemala next fall and then retrace the path that he believes Lehi followed in migrating from the Middle East to South America 600 years before Christ.

"The name Lehi is actually Chinese," Torrey said. "It means 'good man'."

He believes biblical civilization was related with the Chinese by trade and that Lehi and his followers in the "lost" tribe had set out in an abandoned junk, turning up in Guatemala 344 days later.

Torrey, an experienced seaman, will be attempting the same ocean adventure that Devere Baker, another Mormon tried four times in the 1950s and 1960s. Baker tried it in various rafts, three of which floundered on the coast and the final one took him as far as Hawaii in 69 days. . . .

Torrey believes he can prove the possibility of migration of Caucasians from the Middle East to an area in South South America [sic] where evidence of ancient civilization has been found.

[1972](#) [Walter Stout](#)

A Synopsis of the Book of Mormon Practical Geography, Upland, California, 1972.

[See the 1950, 1970 notations]

[1972^](#) [Robert J. Matthews](#)

"Notes on Lehi's Travels," in *BYU Studies* 12 (Spring 1972): pp. 312-14.

Robert Matthews writes:

The small book called A Compendium of the Doctrines of the Gospel, published in 1884 by Elders Franklin D. Richards and James A. Little, contains a statement as follows:

Lehi's Travels--Revelation to Joseph the Seer. The course that Lehi and his company traveled from Jerusalem to the place of their destination: They traveled nearly a south, southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude; then, nearly east to the Sea of Arabia, then sailed in a southeast direction, and landed on the continent of South America, in Chile, thirty degrees south latitude.

No source is given for this information, beyond the introductory statement that it was a Revelation to Joseph the Seer, which of course means Joseph Smith. An intriguing problem for historians is where this statement came from and whether, indeed, it can really be traced to Joseph Smith.

A similar statement is attributed to Frederick G. Williams and seems to be associated in some way with the time of the dedicatory services of the Kirtland Temple in March 1835. This account, presented by Nancy C. Williams in her book, *After One Hundred Years*, puts forth the same basic information but contains a few variants from that published in the Compendium and offers some unique spelling and capitalization:

The course that Lehi traveled from the city of Jerusalem to the place where he and his family took ship, they traveled nearly a south south East direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of North Latitude, then nearly east to the Sea of Arabia then sailed in a south east direction and landed on the

continent of South America in Chile thirty degrees south Latitude.

Nancy C. Williams indicated that Frederick G. Williams first wrote the account in pencil along with other notes (presumably at the Kirtland Temple dedication), and that after returning home he rewrote the item in ink on another sheet of paper. Both the pencil copy and the ink copy are said to have been loaned to the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City in the 1860s by Frederick's son Ezra.

A footnote on page 102 of the book *After One Hundred Years*, reports that Nancy Williams and others received "a wonderful manifestation that it was indeed a Revelation given to Frederick G. Williams for him and his family." This is a somewhat different emphasis than the declaration of the Compendium (cited earlier) that this information was a "revelation to Joseph the Seer."

Interest in this whole matter is increased because of another early source. In the spring of 1845, in Nauvoo, Dr. John M. Bernhisel made a partial copy of the manuscript of Joseph Smith's "new translation" of the Bible. Although the statement about Lehi's travels apparently has nothing to do with the translation of the Bible, the "Lehi" statement is found on the last leaf of the Bernhisel copy. It is on a page by itself without a heading, and there is no comment concerning it. Dr. Bernhisel did not number the pages of his manuscript after page 21, but if they were numbered consecutively, the page containing the Lehi statement would be number 135. The reverse side of the page is blank. The exact text and spelling of the statement as it appears in the Bernhisel copy is as follows:

The course that Lehi travelled from the city of Jerusalem to the place where he and his family took ship. They travelled nearly a south south East direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of North Latitude then nearly East to the sea of Arabia then sailed in a south east direction and landed on the continent of South America in Chile thirty degrees south latitude.

It will be noted that the Bernhisel copy has the same wording as the Williams account [see the notation for 1836] and nearly the same spelling and capitalization, with striking correlation in the spelling of "latitude."

Bernhisel offers no date as to when he recorded this item, but the entire Bernhisel manuscript was made during May and June 1845 and is dated several times in the manuscript. The penmanship of the Lehi entry appears to be consistent with the remainder of the manuscript, having the same style of writing, capitalization, and word-slant. In every respect it seems to be the handwriting of Dr. Bernhisel recorded during the May-June 1845 period. There appears to be no reason to suggest that the entry was not written at the same time as the manuscript which it accompanies.

This matter has importance historically since it suggests that the Bernhisel and the Williams accounts represent the same textual source, while differing somewhat from the account given in the Compendium. Even more important is the fact that the Lehi item was considered significant enough to Dr. Bernhisel in 1845 for him to copy it into his records. The Bernhisel copy becomes an earlier source by nearly forty years than the printed Compendium of 1884.

Since the "Lehi" information is in no way connected with the "new translation" of the Bible, a question arises as to how Dr. Bernhisel obtained the information in the first place. This of course we do not know, but it is possible that he found it among the sheets of the Bible manuscripts and simply recorded it because it was interesting to him. Whether the Lehi item was ever among the pages of the Bible translation we do not know, but it is certainly not among them today. The original manuscripts of Joseph Smith's "new translation" of the Bible which Dr. Bernhisel used are in the RLDS archives in Independence, Missouri, and the writer knows from personal examination that the Lehi statement is not currently in the collection.

We may someday learn more about the statement of Lehi's travels. In the meantime, it is a matter of interest to historians to know that Dr. Bernhisel had access to it in 1845 and included it with his copy of Joseph Smith's new translation of the Bible.

[See the 1845 notation]

1973?^ Church Education System

Student Manual, Book of Mormon, vol. 1, no date. (copy at the BYU Library)

This CES Student Manual for the Book of Mormon was "published for the use of college students in the Church Educational System." Neal A. Maxwell was commissioner at the time as he gives a message on page 3. On page 66 is a map of Lehi's Travels in the Old World. In tracking Lehi's travels through Arabia, it apparently approximates Nibley's map of 1957. For Lehi's sea voyage, the route takes a southerly route past Australia, eventually pointing to a landing in South America. On page 67 there are two quotes concerning Lehi's Travels"

Lehi's Travels--Revelation to Joseph the Seer. The course that Lehi and his company traveled from Jerusalem to the place of their destination:

They traveled nearly a south, southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude; then, nearly east to the Sea of Arabia, then sailed in a southeast direction, and landed on the continent of South America, in Chile, thirty degrees south latitude. (Franklin D. Richards and James A. Little, A Compendium of the Doctrine and Covenants, rev. ed., 1925, p. 272.)

Lehi went down by the Red Sea to the great Southern Ocean, and crossed over to this land, and landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien. (Joseph Fielding Smith, comp. Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 267.)

[1973? Map: Lehi's Travels in the Old World & A Possible Route of Lehi's Colony to the Promised Land. Source: Church Education System, Student Manual, Book of Mormon, vol. 1, no date (approximately 1973?), p. 66]

1973 Louise Clark Gregson

Gregson's Stories of the Scriptures of Ancient America For Young and Old: A Continuous Narrative of the Book of Mormon: The Migration, Volume II. Independence, MO: Gregson's Storybooks, 1973.

Although this book is a storybook approach to the Book of Mormon, it does contain some maps relative to Lehi's journey to the promised land. Although nothing is said in the text, the maps have Lehi traveling down the coast of the Red Sea and then eastward to the Qarra Mountains (Bountiful). From here the route is eastward through the Malacca Straits and across the Pacific to the region of Costa Rica in Central America.

[1973 The Borders Near the Shore of the Red Sea. Lehi departed into the wilderness; he came down by the borders near the shores of the Red Sea; he traveled in the wilderness in the borders which were nearer the Red Sea. Artist: A. W. G. Louise Clark Gregson, Gregson's Stories of the Scriptures of Ancient America For Young and Old: A Continuous Narrative of the Book of Mormon: The Migration, Volume II. Independence, MO: Gregson's Storybooks, 1973, p. 39.]

[1973 Land of Jerusalem. Lehi and his people traveled in a south, southeasterly direction (1 Nephi 5:16). Later, they traveled nearly eastward (1 Nephi 5:55). Artist: A. W. G. Louise Clark Gregson, *Gregson's Stories of the Scriptures of Ancient America For Young and Old: A Continuous Narrative of the Book of Mormon: The Migration, Volume II*. Independence, MO: Gregson's Storybooks, 1973, p. 91.]

[1973 Book of Mormon Crossing of Nephites. Artist: F.E.F. Louise Clark Gregson, *Gregson's Stories of the Scriptures of Ancient America For Young and Old: A Continuous Narrative of the Book of Mormon: The Migration, Volume II*. Independence, MO: Gregson's Storybooks, 1973, p. 111.]

1973^ Arthur Wallace

Can Mormonism Be Proved Experimentally? Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edward Brothers, Inc. 1973.

This is an LDS apologetic work. Chapter 10, "Ancient History vs. The Book of Mormon," relies heavily on the writings of Hugh Nibley. Arthur Wallace writes:

Following is a list of some of the interesting points in which the Book of Mormon answers the tests of its ancient background in the Old World. Lack of space permits only a sampling of such information. Most of the information discussed here has been borrowed from Nibley with his permission. The evidence for each point is documented in his writings. . . .

17. The eight years necessary for Lehi's colony to cross Arabia fits properly into the methods and habits of travel by desert people. Evidence indicates that Lehi's colony traveled by camel. Their failure to mention it specifically is a mark of authenticity because camel was "the" mode of travel. An Arab never said he traveled with a camel because travel until recently meant to go by camel. No mention was made of Lehi's group encountering other parties during the eight years in the desert. It was prudent behavior, according to ancient custom, to avoid such since travel involved trespassing most or all of the way.

Point #17 is worthy of note because it represents how ideas change. It first attacks outdated views that Lehi traveled on foot, and yet it supports the idea that Lehi traveled in isolation from others. Potter & Wellington (1998-2003) would discard this idea of isolation by explaining that trespassing on the watering holes along the Frankincense Trail meant instant death.

1974^ Ross T. and Ruth R. Christensen

"Archaeology Reveals Old Testament History: Digging for the Truth," Ensign, Feb. 1974, p. 66.

The Christensens write the following concerning what would come to be known as "Lehi's Cave":

Modern archaeologists may have found the place Lehi. Khirbet Beit Lei, which may be translated "Ruin of the House of Lehi," is a hill located some 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem, not far from Mareshah (Marissa). Twelve years ago, while building a road on the eastern slope, workmen discovered an ancient tomb carved out of the soft limestone. Writing and various pictures had been scratched on its walls. The written messages themselves were removed from the tomb walls and exhibited in the Israel Museum of Jerusalem.

The three main inscriptions are written in the Old Hebrew script of the sixth century B.C. One of them is a prayer for rescue: "Deliver us, O Lord." Another is a plea for forgiveness: "Absolve us, O merciful God." The third is a prophetic utterance in poetic form: "I am Jehovah thy God: I will accept the cities of Judah and will redeem Jerusalem." In no instance, however, is the exact wording found in the bible. It is suggested that they may have been written by some nonbiblical prophet who was fleeing the Holy city in the early

sixth century B.C., perhaps at the time of the Babylonian conquest.

In addition to the writings, pictures of three human figures are cut into the tomb walls, one holding what looks like a lyre, one with hands upraised as if in prayer, and one wearing dress and headgear suggesting a priest or Levite. Also on the walls are two ships with sails and tow figures that may be tents.

What connection does the tomb at Khirbet Beit Lei have with the Book of Mormon prophet Lehi and his family? "The land of our father's inheritance" (1 Ne. 3:16, 22) was apparently some sort of family estate. Was it the same as the "House of Lehi" now discovered by archaeology? The ruin is located approximately where we might expect to find the biblical place Lehi. This family estate figures prominently in the story of Lehi's departure from the Holy Land in 600 B.C. It appears to have been somewhat removed from Jerusalem itself ("let us go down to the land of our father's inheritance"). Perhaps it lay in a southerly direction from the city, since the four sons on their way from there back to their encampment beside the Red Sea hid for a time in "the cavity of a rock" (1 Ne. 3:27), perhaps to them a familiar spot on their father's estate.

[1974^](#) [Joseph Ginat](#)

"The Beith Lehi Cave" (Video & Transcript), 1974.

In 1974 Cleon Skousen would include the following in his book *Treasures from the Book of Mormon*, vol. 1 (pp. 1056-1058):

Although it was unknown to Latter-day Saints until very recently, there is a site approximately 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem which has been known locally for centuries as Beith Lehi or the "House of Lehi." Adjacent to this site is a cave in which someone hid out around 600 B.c., and made a number of datable inscriptions on the wall of this cave.

During 1970-71, Dr. Joseph Ginat, an administrative assistant to the minister of Arab affairs of Israel, came to Utah to do some specialized studies and during this visit he saw a copy of the Book of Mormon for the first time. As a professionally trained archaeologist, he became fascinated with the possibility that the opening chapters of the Book of Mormon provided an explanation for the "Lehi story" which archaeologists in Israel have known about for many years.

Dr. Ginat pointed out that not only could the ruins of the ancient community of Lehi have been the residence of the prophet Lehi but the nearby cave very well could have been the hideout for Nephi, Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Zoram. Dr. Ginat feels that after the death of Laban the sons of Lehi would have felt compelled to go into hiding until the state of alarm had subsided. They would therefore have chosen some extremely obscure place with which they were familiar and where they knew they could obtain food and water. Dr. Ginat states that the cave of Beith Lehi fits all of these requirements in every respect.

He further emphasizes that the Book of Mormon says these men were gone so long their mother gave up hope of their ever returning and went into mourning, thinking they were dead. This circumstance confirms the idea that they were in hiding for a long time and could have written the inscriptions on the wall of the Beith Lehi cave indicating that eventually Jerusalem would be redeemed.

In June, 1974, Dr. Ginat returned to Utah with a film of the Beith Lehi cave and the surrounding terrain. He also brought with him a full-scale cast of the inscriptions on the wall of the cave.

The narration on the Israeli film is very interesting since it gives a rather complete historical background on the Beith Lehi site, the nearby cave, and the Arab tradition concerning the ancient prophet Lehi who once lived there. (This film may be obtained from Terra Travel, 548 East South Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah.)

Here is a complete transcription of that narration:

The Beith Lehi Cave

Twenty miles southeast of Jerusalem, in the Judean mountains, not far from the ancient fortress towns of Lakhish and Maresha, and in the vicinity of the modern Israeli village of Amatzia, named after the king of Judea, lie the ruins of an ancient village named Beith Lei (Lehi) "The House of Lehi."

In 1961, in the course of the construction of a military patrol road, along what was at the time the Israeli-Jordanian border line, a bulldozer hit and partly destroyed the roof of a tiny cave; by mere good luck there was no damage to the walls of the cave on which ancient drawings and inscriptions in old Hebrew script were uncovered by the astonished workers. Two archaeologists, Dr. Joseph Naveh of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Dr. Frank Moore Cross Jr. of Brandeis University (Mass.), tried to decipher the large inscription on the wall. According to Dr. Cross this inscription reads: "I am Yahweh thy God. I shall accept the cities of Judah and will redeem Jerusalem."

Who were the inhabitants of the Beith Lehi cave? Dr. Naveh believes that the inscription was engraved by a Levitic priest. Dr. Cross thinks that the inscription is the expression of a lost prophecy. As the name of God and his deeds are engraved in the first person, Cross concludes that the inhabitant of the cave was a prophet fleeing Jerusalem. Joseph Ginat, an Israeli anthropologist, who lectured at the University of Utah and at BYU believes that the cave may have served as a hiding place to an important person who was seeking refuge.

The narrow size of the cave, its location on the slope of the hill at a safe distance from the village but quite close to the spring--the only source of water in the area--indicates that the cave was used as a hiding place rather than normal living place. Up on the Beith Lehi hill there are many spacious and comfortable caves which served as regular living hamlets for the inhabitants of the village. In the early Christian period some of those caves served as hiding places for Christians fleeing Roman persecution. One of those caves, on top of the Beith Lehi hill, has been rediscovered in 1900 by Stewart McAllister who described it as the Rock Cut chapel. This cave probably served as a chapel for the early Christians who were hiding in the area.

In 701 B.C. the village was destroyed by the Assyrian king Sennacherib on the way to conquer Jerusalem. The few survivors of the village had probably fled to Jerusalem. As the inscription found in the cave has been dated back to the sixth century B.C.--probably during the period of Jeremiah--the cave's inhabitants may have belonged to a family who once owned property in the village and returned to the place to seek refuge. In those days of distress, it seemingly took a man of great vision to write words of redemption and hope like those engraved in the stone: "And I will Redeem Jerusalem"

The drawings of sailing boats found in the cave are very unusual for a mountain area so far away from the sea. There is a possibility that the people who took shelter in the cave intended to reach the sea, thus drawing plans of vessels or merely expressing a hope to be delivered by God.

There was obviously a road connection between the Beith Lehi area and the Red Sea shores. up to this day, several inhabitants of a village . . . a few miles away from the cave are believed to be descendants of Israelites who lived along the shores of the Red Sea on the Arabian desert.

Where does the origin of the name Beith Lehi come from? Bedouins, the nomad inhabitants of the area, whose traditions and legends are transmitted from generation to generation, have an interesting version. One of those settled Bedouins, Mahmoud Ali Hassan Jaaoui, who lives in the neighboring village of Idna and who dwells with his flock during the spring months in a cave of a nearby hill, said that the place is called after an Israelite prophet by the name of Lehi who in ancient days was sitting under an old oak tree judging his people. Around the old oak tree there is a stone fence which according to the Bedouin was erected in ancient times to protect the holy place. The Bedouins prevent their sheep and goats from approaching this sacred tree.

The area around the Beith Lehi cave is historically and archaeologically one of the most interesting areas of the holy land. Until now only relatively few searches and excavations have been conducted in this area.

Source: W. Cleon Skousen, Treasures from the Book of Mormon, vol. 1, 1974, pp. 1056-1058.

Note* The cave where Nephi and his brothers hid out would also be associated with Rachel's tomb (see the 1974 Butterworth notation)

Note* For other notations on the Cave see 1972.

[1974^](#) [F. E. Butterworth](#)

Pilgrims of the Pacific, Independence, MO: Herald House, 1974, pp. 117-129.

Edward Butterworth of the RLDS Church writes the following concerning Lehi's travels to the promised land:

In order to locate the beginning of the Nephite migration we must find Lehi's hometown. From the usage of the words "up" and "down" in relation to Jerusalem and the Red Sea we know that "up" means north and "down" means south. Therefore, when Lehi's sons went "down to their fathers' inheritance" we know he lived somewhere south of Jerusalem. That it was not far south is presumed by the usage of the word "at" in the passage, "My father Lehi having dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days."

The reference "down to our father's inheritance" establishes two facts: first, that Lehi's land was inherited from his ancestors, and second that it was "down" or south of Jerusalem. Hebron--burial place of Lehi's forefathers Abraham Isaac, and Jacob--is south of Jerusalem. All things being equal, Lehi should have been heir to a burial plot here under the oaks of Mamre, for it was stated in the ancient chronicles that he was a direct descendant of Joseph, son of Jacob and Rachel. [see 1 Nephi 1:164, 165;]

It is interesting to note, however, that Joseph, son of Jacob and progenitor of Lehi, was not interred in the family burial place at Hebron. His loved ones carried his bones around for forty years and finally left them in Shechem, many miles to the north of Jerusalem. This may have been because Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt and, after rising to power, gained vast holdings in that land. This may also account for the fact that Joseph's posterity no longer held claim to the ancestral lands in Hebron. . . .

In search of Lehi's land, south of Jerusalem, we find another possible plot of ancestral ground. Jacob erected a pillar near Zelzah, four miles south of Jerusalem and one mile north of Bethlehem. [see map below] This spot is accepted by Jews, Christians, and Arabs as the place of Rachel's tomb. . . . About thirty years after Rachel's death, Jacob went to Egypt to see his son, Joseph. Part of the special blessing he bestowed on Joseph's children during his seventeen years in Egypt would logically have been the land where Joseph's mother, Rachel, was buried.

If this is true, as I strongly believe, this same land would also be an inheritance of Joseph's posterity, including Lehi. The fact that Zelzah is only four miles south of Jerusalem agrees with the time and distance element suggested in Nephi's historical account of this affair. . . . [pp. 119-120]

Lehi began his journey a few miles south of Jerusalem, probably at Zelzah. . . . [p. 123]

[1974 [Map: Locations of Zelzah, Hebron, Elealeh, Heshbon, Moab. Note: Lehi would have been comparatively safe on the east shores of the Dead Sea, for this belonged to Reuben--the only one of Joseph's brothers who was friendly when they sold him into Egypt. . . . F. E. Butterworth, *Pilgrims of the Pacific, Independence, MO: Herald House, 1974, p. 125*\]](#)

After blessing all his sons, Jacob turned to Joseph and said, "Joseph is a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall" (Genesis 49:1, 22). If Joseph was a "fruitful bough," his "branches" would no doubt refer to his posterity, and Lehi definitely fulfilled this--especially since he and his family crossed the sea. That the "wall" stood for the sea is confirmed by Isaiah:

For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah: the lords of the heathen have broken down

the principal plants thereof, they are come even unto Jazer, they wandered through the wilderness; her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea.--Isaiah 16:8.

In this same reference about Joseph's clan, we find a strange combination of names. Herein is an important key to the direction Lehi's colony may have traveled. The reference to Moab includes the entire east shore of the Dead Sea. The place names of Jazer, Elealeh, Heshbon, and Kirhareth are important centers where the travelers may have stopped, if only to water their camels on the way to the Red Sea [see map above]. . . . [p. 124]

The book of Jeremiah contains a reference to the vine of Sibmah: "O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer: thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach even to the sea of Jazer" (Jeremiah 48:32). . . . in the Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, under the heading of Jazer, we find that it was a city situated in the south part of Gilead, a territory east of the river Jordan. Manasseh's son, Machir, dwelt in this place. . . . After dispossessing the Amorites of Sibmah, Manasseh took possession of that city also, establishing a viable link between the vine of Sibmah and the posterity of Joseph. . . .

The prophet Jeremiah had known of the departure of this remnant from Jerusalem and had recorded it in his voluminous writings His language in biblical translation lost some important details, but in general he described the "fall" of Jerusalem and pointed toward the Red Sea as the direction the fleeing remnant was to go:

Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out. Surely he shall make their habitations desolate with them. The earth is moved at the noise of their fall, at the cry the noise thereof was heard in the Red Sea.--Jeremiah 49:20, 21.

Lehi's migration out of Jerusalem by way of the Red Sea about the time of the fall of that great city fulfills this Bible prophecy: "And he [Lehi] came down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 1:30;) . . . [pp. 126-127]

To assist [Lehi] in choosing the most advantageous route, the Lord provided Lehi with a compass. Beside his tent door one morning he found a brass ball with two spindles inside. One of these pointed south-southeast, the direction in which they were to go. . . .

On his secret journey to the Promised Land, Lehi was led by the strange compass through the loneliest places on earth. . . . Lehi's colony was probably the first to cross the great empty quarter of Rub-Al-Khali, Arabia. . . . [p. 128] [See map below]

The following are the notes to the map below:

1. Jerusalem. Lehi evidently led his followers along the east shore of the Dead Sea.
2. Red Sea. Nephi says the first stopping place of the Nephites was near the "fountain of the Red Sea." The eastern gulf of the Red Sea could qualify. The river Laman could be any "wadi" near this place even though it has no water in it at present. The valley Lemuel could be the long valley which was "nearer the borders of the Red Sea."
3. There is a place on the south coast of Saudi Arabia called Al Jazir. If this is the "Jazer" mentioned in the prophecies that was situated on the sea "Irreantum," to follow a direct line east and west would make the travelers turn eastward at this point on the Red Sea.

[1974 Map: Nephite Route Across Arabia

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eastern gulf of the Red Sea could qualify. The river Laman could be any "wadi" near this place even though it has no water in it at present. The valley Lemuel could be the long valley which was "nearer the borders of the Red Sea.

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Source: F. E. Butterworth, *Pilgrims of the Pacific, Independence, MO: Herald House, 1974, p. 118*]

We know little of the ships used by the Nephite colony, but we do know they were above-water craft of "curious workmanship" and were guided both by compass and by rudder. They could have followed two possible routes. The first was the same as that taken by the Jaredites below Australia as described in Part 1, and the second was through the Molucca Straits above Australia. [see map below]

[1974 Map: Possible Jaredite Route; Possible Nephite Route F. E. Butterworth, *Pilgrims of the Pacific, Independence, MO: Herald House, 1974, p. 68*]

I favor the latter theory for two reasons. First, the southern or Jaredite trail would have been too rough for an above-water craft. Second with its conventional design, the fragile Nephite ship would have been vulnerable to the icebergs and rough waters below Australia.

Following the currents of wind and water from the eastern end of the Molucca Straits to ancient America [see maps below], Lehi and his colony could have landed somewhere along the Central American Coast.

[1974 Map: Ocean Currents: September-March; March-September F. E. Butterworth, *Pilgrims of the Pacific, Independence, MO: Herald House, 1974, pp. 50-51*]

1974^ J. Nile Washburn

Book of Mormon Lands and Times, Horizon Publishers, 1974.

The basic approach of this book is internal, and so from that perspective, Lehi's journey through Arabia is reviewed with scriptural notations. The following comments, however are worthy of note:

It is interesting, if of no great value, to wonder if the places Shazer and Nahom were named for the eldest sons of Ishmael. The idea is plausible, especially if it is recalled that Laman and Lemuel, the sons of Lehi, had had a river and a valley named for them. (1 Nephi 2:8-9)

By the time the Nephites reached the sea Irreantum, they may have traveled as much as fifteen hundred miles along the coast of the Red Sea. [p. 14]

Nephi apparently had to do most of the job of shipbuilding by himself. (1 Nephi 18:4) . . . When the ship was at last made ready, it was stocked with provisions and then boarded by all of the Lehi colony . . . [p. 15]

We even know even less about the voyage than we do about the building of the ship. Few details are recorded concerning winds or ocean currents such as we have in the case of the Jaredites. The reason is that the part of the world entered by the Nephites is entirely different. The location of their starting point, the southeastern area of present-day Arabia, throws the whole matter into uncertainty. Off the coast of Arabia there is no prevailing pattern of winds and currents. The area is sufficiently near the equator that the heat affects the ocean currents. . . .

The Nephites . . . sailed into an almost-land-locked sea, a sort of afterthought of the greater ocean.

Their route from southern Arabia, let it be what or where it would, would probably encounter large islands, possibly continental ones, all of which influence the direction and speed of the currents. The map of ocean currents shows the water going every which way, sometimes meeting itself coming in the opposite direction. Land masses which may have influenced the ocean currents which carried them include Malagasy, the Philippines, Sumatra, Singapore, the Celebes, New Guinea, the island continent of Australia, and New Zealand, to say nothing of the islands of the South Pacific. This is to say that no matter which direction the Nephites went, they probably had problems and delays. It is entirely likely that at least once they could have moved from one wind system to another. . . . [p. 16]

Because so little is given in the divine record on this matter, there has been correspondingly little analysis regarding it. There are some guesses at the truth, but they appear to be based upon the obvious. These quotations will illustrate:

Having been brought to the New World by winds and ocean currents, it is believed by those who have given this matter some study that they [the Nephites crossed the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. (Milton R. Hunter and Thomas S. Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon*, Oakland, California: Kolob Book Co., 1950, p. 84.)

This is not very helpful. Where else could they have gone after having embarked from the shore of southeastern Arabia? And this:

It seems quite likely that the Nephites were not one of the two groups of people that landed near the Panuco River, because all theories seem to be in agreement in having them land somewhere on the western coast of the Americas. (Milton R. Hunter, *Great Civilizations and the Book of Mormon*, Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1970, p. 50)

Here is a statement that seems to be somewhat more to the point, more specific:

". . .Lehi went down by the Red Sea to the great southern ocean, and landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien, and improved the country."Times and Seasons, Vol. III, No. 22, September 15, 1842. Quoted by Sidney B. Sperry in the *Book of Mormon Testifies*, Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, p. 63)

An interesting, if equivocal, bit of information should be reported here. It concerns Frederick G. Williams, at one time second counselor to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the First Presidency of the Church. It is reported that one day during the dedication of the Kirtland Temple,

Frederick had in his pocket a piece of paper which he carried to take notes on. On this he wrote in pencil: "John the Beloved"---then a space followed and a few lines written in another language. A large space followed and then at the bottom of the page he wrote the following revelation: "The course that Lehi traveled from the city of Jerusalem to the place where he and his family took ship: They traveled nearly south, southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude. Then nearly east to the Sea of Arabia; then south, southeast direction and landed on the continent of South America in Chili, thirty degrees south latitude." (Nancy C. Williams, *After One Hundred Years, Independence, Missouri: Zion's Printing and Publishing Company*, 1951, pp. 101-102)

The italics are in the book from which the quotation is cited. The footnote on page 102 asserts that this was a "revelation given to Frederick G. Williams for him and his family." How much influence this statement has had in fixing the idea of church members is problematical. I know of no place in our literature in which it is now considered binding upon us as a revelation.

Nevertheless, I do find something interesting. In the 1884 edition of the *Compendium*, by Messrs. Richards and Little, of Salt Lake City, this appears, on page 289:

LEHI'S TRAVELS--Revelation to Joseph the Seer

They traveled nearly a south, southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north

latitude; then, nearly east to the Sea of Arabia, then sailed in a southeast direction, and landed on the continent of South America, in Chili, thirty degrees south latitude.

Note that this is almost word for word the same as the revelation received by Frederick G. Williams for him and his family.

At the time my father and I began our serious study of the Book of Mormon, we accepted without question all the prevailing ideas regarding matters which have since become controversial, such as the South America landing for the Nephites and the west-coast landing for the Jaredites, the two migrations into what is now New York, the notion that Book of Mormon peoples covered vast continental areas and ran to hundreds of millions in population, and other beliefs somewhat less important. After many years of earnest study we were forced to abandon these for other views which it seemed to us were more in keeping with the demands of the text.

If I remember correctly, Col. Willard Young was the first to bring into review the question of the South America landing. We note the following:

When we read in the Book of Mormon that Jared and his brother came to this continent from the confusion and scattering at the Tower and lived more than a thousand years, and covered the whole continent, from sea to sea with towns and cities and that Lehi went down by the Red Sea to the great southern ocean, and crossed over to this land, and landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien, according to the word of the Lord, as a branch of the House of Israel, and then read such a goodly traditional account, as the one below, we cannot but think the Lord has had a hand in bringing to pass this strange act, and proving the Book of Mormon true in eyes of all the people. (Times and Seasons, September 15, 1842)

The Isthmus of Darien is certainly far north of the Chili site. And here is something more:

. . . Central America, or Guatemala, is situated north of the Isthmus of Darien and once embraced several hundred square miles of territory from north to south. The city of Zarahemla, burnt at the crucifixion of the Savior and rebuilt afterwards, stood upon this land as will be seen . . . in the Book of Alma. (J. M. Sjodahl, An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon, page 94. (Quoted from the Times and Seasons, October 1, 1842)

If the foregoing quotations and references appear inconclusive and confusing, it is probably because they are inconclusive and confusing. The point, then, seems to be that we do not have any authoritative statements from revelation or Scripture. We are, therefore, free to do our own thinking, provided always that we keep an open mind and do not lose our patience with others who think differently. . . [pp. 17-19]

[1975^ M. W. H.](#)

"New Records." in Church News 45 (4 January 1975): 15.

Announcement is made here of "Hallowed Journey," a series of albums on which are recorded a dramatization of Lehi's journey to the promised land. This would be "internal" dramatization. No real attempt would be made to mention actual places in Arabia or directions of travel across the ocean.

[1975^ Venice Priddis](#)

The Book and the Map: New Insights into Book of Mormon Geography, SLC: Bookcraft, 1975, pp. 63-70.

Venice Priddis writes from a limited South America perspective of Book of Mormon geography encompassing the countries of Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile. The following are ideas related to Lehi's travels:

The Book of Mormon gives no clue as to that landing place, saying merely, "after we had sailed for the space of many days we did arrive at the promised land. . . ." (1 Nephi 18:23)

A more specific statement on this has come to us from the early days of the Church, and for a long time was generally accepted as a revelation to Joseph Smith. While the statement cannot be definitely substantiated as a revelation it is acknowledged to be in the handwriting of Frederick G. Williams, counselor to Joseph Smith in the First Presidency, and is written on the same loose sheet of paper as an undoubted revelation in the same hand. Especially in view of the categorical nature of the statement, it would be difficult to believe that it did not emanate from, or at least have the approval of, the Prophet Joseph himself. It says that Lehi's group sailed from Arabia, "in a southeast direction, and landed on the continent of South America, in Chili, thirty degrees south latitude." Orson Pratt more than once referred to this landing "on the coast of Chile," and there are other nineteenth-century references in similar terms. The 30o latitude would put the landing near today's Coquimbo, Chile, about 220 miles north of Santiago. . . . Besides beasts in the forests in the new land, Lehi's group discovered "all manner of ore, both of gold and of silver to be found in South America; as a matter of fact, Chile has the biggest "open-pit" copper mine in the world. . . . [pp. 63-64]

[1975 Map: Lehi's Landing--Nephi's Probable Trek. Venice Priddis, *The Book and the Map: New Insights into Book of Mormon Geography*, SLC: Bookcraft, 1975, pp. 66]

[1975 Map: Inca Roads. Venice Priddis, *The Book and the Map: New Insights into Book of Mormon Geography*, SLC: Bookcraft, 1975, pp. 69]

Note* The above maps could be used to illustrate Joel Ricks' ideas of 1904.

[1975 Illustrated Model Neil Steede LIMITED MESOAMERICA]

L.S. = Mesoamerica southeast of Isthmus of Tehuantepec / N.N. = Isthmus of Tehuantepec / L.N. = Mesoamerica northwest of Isthmus of Tehuantepec / H.C. = Not specified (Tuxtla mountains implied) / Sidon = Not specified (Usumacinta River implied).

Source: Alexander Von Wuthenau, *Unexpected Faces in Ancient America, 1500 B.C.-A.D. 1500; the Historical Testimony of Pre-Columbian Artists*, New York: Corwn, 1975. Von Wuthenau reproduces four maps prepared for him by Neil Steede while Steede was a student of Von Wuthenau's at the University of the Americas at Puebla, Mexico, in the early 1970's. Three of the maps, for which no useful comment is given, show "possible routes" of Book of Mormon peoples to the New World; the fourth contains the Meso-American information. See also Ralph Lesh, "Development of the Map," in *Recent Book of Mormon Developments: Articles from The Zarahemla Record*, Raymond C. Treat ed., pp. 81-82, Independence: Zarahemla Research Foundation, 1984.

[1976 Illustrated Model Albert L. Loving LIMITED MESOAMERICA]

L.S. = Mesoamerica southeast of Isthmus of Tehuantepec / N.N. = Isthmus of Tehuantepec / L.N. = Mesoamerica northwest of Isthmus of Tehuantepec / H.C. = The hill at Xochicalco, Morelos, Mexico / Sidon

= Usumacinta River

Source: Albert L. Loving, *From the Tower of Babel to the Hill Ramah/Cumorah in Mexico, Independence, Missouri*: Albert L. Loving, 1976.

[1976^ Daniel Ludlow](#)

A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon, SLC: Deseret Book, 1976

In 1976 Daniel Ludlow formally published in hardback copy the softbound Book of Mormon study guide that had been in use since 1968 by students at B.Y.U. in Religion 121-122 classes. This book contained some appendices and a number of charts plus an internal map, but basically the commentary was the same as the 1968 book. (See the notation for 1968 for textual commentary concerning Lehi's travels)

[1976^ Lynn and Hope Hilton](#)

In Search of Lehi's Trail, SLC: Deseret Book, 1976 See also "In Search of Lehi's Trail" in Ensign 6 (Sept.-Oct. 1976): 32-54, 34-63

Building on the earlier efforts of Hugh Nibley (*Lehi in the Desert*) and examining the text of the Book of Mormon in detail, the Hiltons attempt to identify specific sites and routes followed by Lehi's party as they traveled from Jerusalem to the coast of the Indian Ocean of the Arabian Peninsula. The plan was to photograph the area outlined by Dr. Hugh Nibley in his ten-part series "Lehi in the Desert," published in the Improvement Era in 1950. This was the first serious attempt to acquaint LDS readers with the culture and geography of Lehi's travels through Arabia using numerous photographs. The Hiltons document their preparation (scriptural and historical research, itinerary, coordination with Church authorities, coordination with Arab contacts) along with their travels along "Lehi's Trail": southward along the east coast of the Red Sea, passing through Al Beda (probable Valley of Lemuel), Al Azlan (probable Shazer), Jiddah (possible area of the camp of the broken bow), and then turning eastward at Al Kunfidah (probable Nahom) and passing through Abha on the way to modern Salalah, Oman (probable Bountiful). They then have Lehi's party sailing from the Indian Ocean to China and then across the Pacific to South America.

1 Nephi 2:4 He Departed into the Wilderness:

The term "wilderness" (1 Nephi 2:4) is associated with either wandering away from civilization, traveling in desert valleys and rugged mountains, or traveling in the midst of a different political culture and environment. Whatever the case, the term "wilderness" is tremendously important to the development of a Book of Mormon geographical and cultural scenario and should be specifically defined at every step of the way through the book. Concerning the reference in 1 Nephi 2:4, eastward from Jerusalem is a very large and long wadi or desert valley that contains the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea, and that extends to the Gulf of Aqaba on the Red Sea. The southern extension of this giant rift is called Araba, which means "wilderness." Lehi could have taken a number of directions in traveling from Jerusalem to the Red Sea (see the commentary on 1 Nephi 2:5); however, according to the Hiltons, this route would be the quickest and most logical way for Lehi to go. Dropping down over 3000 feet to the shores of the Dead Sea, and proceeding south, Lehi would follow a well traveled "highway" that would lead him out of the land of Judah, whose southern political borders were by the tip of the Red Sea. [p. 56]

1 Nephi 2:6 When They Had Traveled Three Days in the Wilderness:

According to the Hiltons, after Lehi [and family] reached the "borders" of the Red Sea, they continued to travel for "three days" (1 Nephi 2:6) before they pitched their tents at the valley they called Lemuel. Nephi

doesn't mention how long it took them to travel from the city of Jerusalem to the Red Sea; however, we know that the trip covers over 200 miles. But how fast do camels move? Donkeys? For this information the Hiltons relied on the assistance of Salim Saad, an experienced camel rider and a former British Army officer. Stationed in the Wadi al 'Araba, he had become friends with many desert Bedouins. He explained that a loaded donkey caravan can travel twenty miles in six hours. Drawing on his astonishing library of Arab history, he showed us an example of a camel caravan consisting of thousands of camels averaging twenty-four miles a day on the Haj (Islamic pilgrimage) from Cairo to Mecca. The famous archaeologist Nelson Glueck, a novice camel rider, reported he personally averaged thirteen miles a day on a camel ride from Jerusalem to Aqaba. Pliny tells of a journey from Timna in Yemen to Gaza on the Mediterranean Sea coast in Palestine that required "sixty-five stages," which presumably meant sixty-five days on the road. From Timna to Gaza is a distance of 1,534 miles, an average of twenty-four miles per day.

Thus Lehi's family probably required nearly two weeks to get to the borders of the Red Sea. Another three days' travel time was required to get them to the Valley of Lemuel. If we take into consideration the added time that might be needed because of adverse weather conditions of extreme heat or cold, and the slow movement caused by provisions, we might expect the journey to take at least two and perhaps three weeks. [p. 49]

1 Nephi 2:9 The River Laman . . . Emptied into the Red Sea . . . This River, Continually Running:

After naming the river of water by which they pitched their tent "the river Laman" (1 Nephi 2:8), Lehi mentioned that it "emptied into the Red Sea" (1 Nephi 2:9). Because of this drainage, and because of the mountains which parallel the Red Sea on the east, the route of Lehi would probably have been somewhere between the mountains and the sea. Lehi also uses a figure of speech in comparing Laman to a river that was "continually" running (1 Nephi 2:9). The Hiltons mention in their first book that there is not a single river of any significance that flows year round and reaches the sea in all the Arabian peninsula. This means that the reader must consider the possibility that this river was the direct result of spring rains (a wadi may flow temporarily with water in the rainy season). If so, the beginning of Lehi's journey may have begun in the rainy season (Dec-Feb); and if so, the word "continually" may refer to the nature of a "flowing" river and not to the length of time it flowed. [p. 65]

1 Nephi 2:14 The Valley of Lemuel:

The "valley of Lemuel" (1 Nephi 2:14) seemed to be a safe place for Lehi to rest. Its location according to some was probably "three days" beyond the governing borders of Judah (which stopped at the tip of the Red Sea) and therefore presumably beyond the reach of any political powers in Jerusalem that might harm him or his group. Just as important, or more, the valley was blessed with a "continual" flow of water (see 1 Nephi 2:9). Because of such conditions described, the Hiltons feel that the best location for the Valley of Lemuel is al-Bad in the Wadi El Afal. George Potter, however, proposes a valley at the southern end of the Wadi Tayyib al-Isma as a candidate for the Valley of Lemuel. Nevertheless, what is important to consider here is that both of these areas are situated in the same area as the ancient land of Midian.

According to the Hiltons, this area in northwest Saudi Arabia had a vast livestock population: the armies of Israel, after conquering Midian, took as booty 675,000 sheep plus much other treasure (Numbers 31:43). Jethro, "the priest of Midian" and father-in-law of Moses, lived as a Bedouin in the land of Midian. (Exodus 2:16, 3:1). Concerning the presence of other people in Lehi's time, there can be no doubt that nomadic Bedouin tribes occupied the Arabian peninsula from ancient times. [pp. 27, 28, 33]

1 Nephi 16:13 A South-Southeast Direction:

The Hiltons suggest that from this point of their journey near the northern tip of the Red Sea until they reached Bountiful, Lehi was probably traveling on what was called the "Frankincense Trail." Frankincense was highly valued and came from certain locations in the southern part of Saudi Arabia. It was shipped

overland along major trails that soon became major highways of commerce. As water was the determining factor of any travel in Arabia, these trails connected hand-dug wells all along the way (p. 77).

They found that there existed a well-traveled, south-southeastern route along the Red Sea coast. They believe that Lehi would not have left an established path to roam on waterless mountains and deserts. The Book of Mormon does not say he was hiding on his journey, nor does it say he was fleeing from pursuit as some have thought; so it is likely that he kept to the known highways of the day. Further evidence for this supposition is Nephi's statement that they traveled in the borders of the Red Sea (1 Nephi 2:5), right where the frankincense trail has existed from ancient times (pp. 32-33).

The Hiltons note that the word trail is apt to be misleading. It does not refer to a well-defined, relatively narrow path or roadway, but to a more general route that followed through this valley, that canyon, etc. The width of the route varied with the geography, ranging from a half mile to a dozen (even at one point up to fifty) miles wide. Travelers could thus camp great distances from one another and still be at the same point on the same trail (p. 32).

The Frankincense Trails: The ancient caravan route that is known as the frankincense trail follows almost exactly the theoretical trail constructed from the account recorded in the Book of Mormon. The much traveled trail begins at the coast of modern Oman. From there it goes from ancient waterhole to waterhole throughout the Middle East. We should note that the word trail does not refer to a well-defined, narrow path or roadway, but to a more general route that followed a valley or canyon. The width of the route varied with the geography, ranging from a half mile to up to fifty miles wide at one point.

Lehi's Trail The Book of Mormon does not say that Lehi was hiding on his journey, nor does it say that he was fleeing pursuit, as some have thought. It is likely that he kept to the known highways of the day rather than roamed in the waterless mountains and deserts. Further evidence for this supposition is Nephi's statement that they traveled in the borders of the Red Sea, later south-southeast, and finally eastward, arriving at the land they called Bountiful. [p. 22-23]

1 Nephi 16:13 A south-southeast direction (Frankincense Trail):

In 1976 the Hiltons wrote that a four-day journey in a south-southeast direction carried Lehi to a place they called Shazer. This part of the journey probably continued down the shores of the Red Sea, which is oriented in the same direction. If they averaged 24 miles per day, then a four day journey would cover about 96 miles. This distance would bring the colony approximately to Wadi Al Azlan, long an important and large oasis on the Red Sea coastal plain, which may have been the location of Shazer. [pp. 32-33, 50, 77]

1 Nephi 16:18 I Did Break My Bow (Location):

It was at Jiddah that the Hiltons experienced "a merciless combination of heat, humidity, sand, and salt--a force strong enough to destroy steel." They were stunned to see holes rusted through car fenders in a few months' time. This climate, plus the fact that Lehi's party had moved away from the dry climate of Jerusalem, might explain why Nephi's steel bow was broken, and how the other wooden bows might have lost their spring by absorbing moisture. The Hiltons also found that, according to knowledgeable Arab sources, the pomegranate trees which grow around Jiddah would have provided good wood for Nephi to have used in building a new bow. [pp. 81,82]

1 Nephi 17:1 We Did Wade through Much Affliction in the Wilderness:

According to the Hiltons, the map shows two sections of travel from Lehi's valley of Lemuel (near Aqaba) to Bountiful (on the Oman coast) where water is so scarce that travel would be difficult. The first is the journey from Jiddah, in Saudi Arabia, to Al Qunfidhah, which is close enough to the nineteenth parallel that it may have been [close to] Lehi's camp Nahom, where Ishmael died. Here water was spaced out an

average of twenty-four miles apart. The second sandy stretch appears on the eastward leg of the journey, running from Najran (near Nahom) in Saudi Arabia to . . . Oman (Bountiful), where water was found every twenty-six miles on the average (with the longest waterless stretch being sixty-six miles). Interestingly enough, these two segments of the trip seem to have caused Lehi's party the most suffering, according to Nephi's account (1 Nephi 16:20, 17:1) [p. 98]

The Hiltons note that Salalah is the only place on earth where frankincense trees are indigenous. Seedlings have been transplanted to Yemen and Somaliland on the African coast; but at the time of Lehi, Salalah held a near monopoly. (Gus W. Van Beek, "The Rise and Fall of Arabia Felix," *Scientific America*, Dec. 1969, 221:36, 41.) Pliny, a Greek naturalist (A.D. 23-79), described the land of frankincense bounded by the sea and by high cliffs. He said that only 3,000 families were even allowed to see the trees; during pruning and harvest such supposedly polluting factors as women or dead bodies were strictly forbidden. (Pliny, *Natural History*, H. Rackham tr., London, William Heinemann LTD, 1952, 4:39) [Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, "In Search of Lehi's Trail: Part I, The Preparation," in the *Ensign*, September 1976, p. 51]

[1976 Map: Possible Route of Lehi's Journey in the Wilderness. Lynn and Hope Hilton, *In Search of Lehi's Trail, SLC: Deseret Book, 1976, pp. 22-23. See also "In Search of Lehi's Trail" in Ensign 6 (Sept.-Oct. 1976): 32-54, 34-63]*

1 Nephi 18:2 Neither Did I Build the Ship after the Manner of Men:

The Hiltons were the first to seriously examine the building and navigation of Nephi's ship:

Where might Nephi have gone to find ore to make his tools? Conscious of our approaching deadline to leave Salalah, we had no time to ramble through the mountains, but local people told us of an iron mine in a neighboring province. Even if there had been nothing nearer in Nephi's time, he would have been able to make the ten-day journey to Jabal Al Akhdar to obtain ore there. However, we felt that Nephi had probably found his own source under the inspiration of the Lord, rather than going to a working mine, for he states that he made fire by striking two stones together and that he had to make his own bellows of skins to blow the fire. (1 Nephi 17:10-11) . . .

We knew from our research that an iron and steel manufacturing industry had been carried on since at least the ninth century B.C. at Aqaba (perhaps the first stop on Lehi's journey out of Jerusalem). . . . Chemical analysis of the slag and ore taken from the old tailing piles [Nelson Glueck] analyzed showed 59 percent iron and 10 percent copper. (Glueck, p. 237). . . . We were excited when we discovered a skin bellows in an old market area in Salalah, the very place Nephi may have used one. . . .

We noticed two basic patterns of shipbuilding in shipyards in Jiddah and Salalah. In each case, the builder laid the keel and fastened the ribs to the keel. The ribs were always made out of tree limbs whose curve provided the desired angle for the ribs. Planks were fastened to the skeleton either by nailing or by "sewing." . . . We were intrigued that this method [sewing] of shipbuilding was used only in Yemen and Oman and apparently dates far back in antiquity. . . .

In building his own ship, Nephi could have cut down trees and dragged them to the sandy beach using camel power, or he could have purchased dressed lumber from the local people. He does not tell us he got his timbers, but he does comment that the completed ship "was good, and that the workmanship thereof was exceeding fine." (1 Nephi 18:4)

As we have noted before, Nephi did not build the ship "after the manner of men," but "after the manner which the Lord had shown unto" him. (1 Nephi 18:2) Our examination of ancient shipbuilding serves only to illustrate that for him to have been acquainted with contemporary construction techniques ("the manner of men") was not extraordinary or unlikely. He built in an area where shipbuilding was well-known. . . .

We estimated that, with the birth of children, Lehi's colony may have numbered at least forty-nine

people at the time of embarkation . . . To accommodate a group of this size, we figured that a ship would have to be at least sixty feet long. (we saw several vessels of this size being built by hand and without written plans in the shipyards we visited.) . . . A sixty-foot-long ship would not have been excessively large; many of the dhows now sailing the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea are as large as 180 feet, all handmade. No doubt Nephi's ship had a wide deck, since we are informed that the brothers and their wives made merry on the ship with their singing and dancing. (1 Nephi 18:9) Dancing would have been impossible if the ship had only ribs and planking. Nephi's ship also probably had sails and a rudder or some other way to steer it, because Nephi says he "did guide the ship." (1 Nephi 18:22) . . .

At least part of the time, Nephi had the labor of eight men in his father's colony, and possibly some of the children. Working together, they could perhaps have built such a ship in approximately 200 working days. . . . a more likely time span for building the ship would be well over a year. And since Nephi also had to smelt the iron, make the tools, and probably cut and dress his own lumber, the shipbuilding project could easily have taken about two years. [pp. 107-114]

In Salalah we confirmed the fact that the monsoons, which fill the Qara Mountains with life-giving moisture during the summer, also provide Salalah with a trade wind that could have taken the ship toward the Pacific. As shipping records indicate, the trade winds have, from ancient times, consistently come from the northeast during October through May; from June to September, the winds come from the southwest.

Ships had existed for centuries before Lehi's time along the coasts of southern Arabia, and it is indisputable that Arabians had explored for hundreds of miles along the coastline. But the first record we were able to find of anyone sailing on the open sea is from the first century A.D. . . . By the sixth century A.D., Araba entrepreneurs were sailing their dhows all the way from the Arabian peninsula to China. Arab ships rode the monsoons to the Malabar coast of India, then on the Ceylon in time to catch the summer monsoon (June to September) and speed across the often treacherous Bay of Bengal, past the Nicobar Islands, through the Malacca Straits, and into the South China Sea. From here they were able to make a quick, if risky, thirty-day run up to the main trading station at Canton in China. The trip from the Arabian peninsula to China took approximately 120 days of straight sailing, or six months counting provisioning stops along the way. (Nancy Jenkins, "The China Trade,," *Aramco World Magazine*, July-August 1975, 26:24, 26-27.)

Once they emerged from the Malacca Straits, the dhows would sometimes be blown completely off course and would end up in the Pacific . . . if it took later sailors 120 days to sail from Arabia to China, it would possibly have taken Nephi one year to fifteen months to cover the three-times-longer distance between Arabia and South America. [pp. 114-115]

Conclusions:

1. The Arabian peninsula, through which Lehi's route in 600 B.C. went, was not an unpopulated wilderness, but a land where many people had worked out a precise and precarious relationship to their water-poor land.
2. Frankincense, produced in Salalah, Oman, on the Arabian Sea since at least 1500 B.C. (and only there until long after Lehi), was in such demand in the ancient world that huge trade routes had been established. The constant travel of men, camels, news, and wealth kept the Arabian peninsula from being isolated from the rest of the Middle East.
3. Thousands of people made similar journeys to Salalah that Lehi probably made. Their experiences, recorded in ancient documents and in less obvious evidence of pictographs, hand-dug wells, and well-preserved traditions, confirms that the trip was not an easy one. The protection and guidance of the Lord

was necessary to the success of Lehi's little colony.

4. We feel that we found reasonable evidence for suggesting Wadi El Afal in Saudi Arabia as the Valley of Lemuel, and even more conclusive evidence that Salalah in Oman is the land Bountiful.

5. The weather and geography there have changed little, if any, since Lehi's day.

6. Lehi quite likely adopted the life-style of the nomadic Arabian tribes for the years of his Arabian journey, including the custom of living in tents and the methods of finding water, food, and transporting people and provisions mainly by camel.

Some North and South American Indian art forms appear to have originated among the Semitic peoples of Arabia, -or possibly both cultures derived their art forms from some common source.

8. Nephi could have been exposed to both ironmaking and shipbuilding while traveling southward.

9. there is much yet to be learned from the accumulated records and traditions of the Arabs that Latter-day Saints will find helpful. [pp. 115-116]

Note* The Hilton's give the following research in order to substantiate their thinking on the route of the Frankincense trails: ["Forming a Theory" pp. 21-29]

[1976^ David Palmer](#)

"Survey of Pre-1830 Historical Sources Relating to the Book of Mormon in BYU Studies 17, 1 (1976) : 101-107.

1977 Theoretical Model Richard A. DeLong [LIMITED MESOAMERICA]

L.S. = Mesoamerica southeast of Isthmus of Tehuantepec / N.N. = Isthmus of Tehuantepec / L.N. = Mesoamerica northwest of Isthmus of Tehuantepec / H.C. = In the state of Puebla (eastern part) / Sidon = Usumacinta River

Source: Personal communications from Robert F. Smith to John L. Sorenson dated 5 Oct. 1977 and 27 Feb 1978 reporting lectures by DeLong to the foundation for Research on Ancient America in Independence, MO, on Oct. 2 and Feb. 5. See also FRAA Newsletter 23 (11 May 1976) containing information from a previous Feb. 1, 1976 lecture.

[1977 Gerald Silver](#)

Lehi's Wilderness Journey: An Ensign Sponsored Trip of South Arabia SLC: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1977.

A filmstrip (94 frames, 16 1/2 minutes) based on a journey to the Arabian Peninsula. Arabia "portrays the geography and cultural conditions that could have existed in Lehi's day and gives the viewer a better feeling for and understanding of the journey that Lehi and his family experienced in traveling from Jerusalem to the land Bountiful."

Source: Anita C. Wells, in Donald W. Parry, Jeanette W. Miller, Sandra A. Thorne, A Comprehensive Annotated Book of Mormon Bibliography. Provo, UT: Research Press, 1996, p. 450.

[1977 Illustrated Model Stanford Robison LIMITED MESOAMERICA]

L.S. = Guatemala / N.N. = Peten lakes (was an arm of the sea) / L.N. = Northern Yucatan / H.C. = near Becan in central Yucatan / Sidon = Usumacinta River

Source: Stanford Robison, *The Maya Legacy: A Sequel to the Book of Mormon Story*, Las Vegas, Nevada: Stanford Robison, abt. 1977.

1977^ Cecil C. Le Poideven

Zion, Land of Promise: An Atlas Study of the Book of Mormon, n.p. 1977, p. 26

After an internal review of Lehi's journey, Cecil Le Poideven writes:

Thus we see that they had arrived upon their new land by sailing a ship right across the South Pacific Ocean. Their most probable course appears to have been along the trade-wind route of the westerly trade winds, generally known as The Roaring Forties. This wind would bring them off the coast of Chile; and, by following the northerly bend of these winds and ocean currents, up the west coast of South America, they would be able to land almost anywhere along the coast of Chile or Peru. By studying the record of their travels after their landing, we are able to calculate that they landed somewhere between the twentieth and fortieth parallel of south latitude, on the west coast of South America, probably on the coast of northern Chile.

After quoting 1 Nephi 18:25 in which it says "we did find all manner of ore, both of gold, and of silver, and of copper," Le Poideven writes:

The mention, in the text above, of finding an abundance of ore, both of gold, and of silver, and of copper, substantiates the area of west central South America as being the place of landing of this people. The areas of northern Chile; of Peru; and of Bolivia have always been fabulously rich in those metals.

[1977 Map: The Migration of Lehi and His Sons. Showing the approximate landing places of both the people of Lehi, and the people of Mulek. Cecil G. Le Poidevin, *Zion, Land of Promise: An Atlas Study of the Book of Mormon, n.p., 1977, p. 25*]

1977 Jesse N. Washburn

Book of Mormon Geography for Sunday School Teachers and Others, N.p., 1977.

An intensive study of Book of Mormon geography for Sunday School teachers. The author includes six maps and a list of all the Book of Mormon passages dealing with geography. His conclusions are general--placing Book of Mormon locations in Central America or southern Mexico.

Source: Andrew Teasdale, in Donald W. Parry, Jeanette W. Miller, Sandra A. Thorne, *A Comprehensive Annotated Book of Mormon Bibliography*. Provo, UT: Research Press, 1996, p. 554.

1978, 1984^ Paul Cheesman

The World of the Book of Mormon, SLC: Deseret Book, 1978, pp. 22-24

Paul Cheesman, professor of Religion at Brigham Young University, wrote several books, but refrained from labeling any geographical land mass with the Book of Mormon. His efforts were concentrated in

researching external evidences of the Book of Mormon, such as archaeological ruins, stone boxes and gold plates, etc. Yet in this book Cheesman does write on the various ideas that have been passed down from the beginnings of the Church on Lehi's landing site. He writes:

Lehi's Landing: The following quotation, thought by many to be a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, appeared in print for the first time in A Compendium of the Doctrine of the Gospel by Franklin D. Richards and James A. Little (p. 289):

Lehi's Travels. Revelation to Joseph the Seer: The course that Lehi and his company traveled from Jerusalem to the place of their destination: They traveled nearly a south-southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude; then, nearly east of the Sea of Arabia, then sailed in a southeast direction, and landed on the continent of South America, in Chili [sic], thirty degrees south latitude.

B. H. Roberts gave similar background information with some cautions added:

The only reason so far discovered for regarding the above [Lehi's Travels statement] as a revelation is that it is found written on a loose sheet of paper in the hand writing of Frederick G. Williams, for some years second Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church in the Kirtland period of its history; and follows the body of the revelation contained in Doctrine and Covenants, section vii., relating to John the beloved disciple, remaining on earth, until the glorious coming of Jesus to reign with his Saints. The handwriting is certified to be that of Frederick G. Williams, by his son, Ezra G. Williams, of Ogden, and endorsed on the back of the sheet of paper containing the above passage and the revelation pertaining to John. The indorsement is dated April the 11th, 1864. The revelation pertaining to John has this introductory line. "A Revelation Concerning John, the Beloved Disciple. But there is no heading to the passage relating to the passage about Lehi's travels. The words "Lehi's Travels" and the "Revelation to Joseph the Seer," are added by the publishers, justified as they supposed, doubtless, by the fact that the paragraph is in the hand writing of Frederick G. Williams, Counselor to the Prophet, and on the same page with the body of an undoubted revelation, which was published repeatedly as such in the life time of the Prophet, first in 1833, at Independence, Missouri, in the "Book of Commandments," and subsequently in every edition of the Doctrine and Covenants until now. But the one relating to Lehi's travels was never published in the life-time of the Prophet, and was published no where else until published in the Richards-Little Compendium as noted above. Now, if no more evidence can be found to establish this passage in Richards and Little's Compendium as a "revelation to Joseph the Seer," than the fact that it is found in the hand writing of Frederick G. Williams, and on the same sheet of paper with the body of the revelation about John, the beloved disciple, the evidence of its being a "revelation to Joseph, the Seer," rests on a very unsatisfactory basis. Roberts, New Witness for God 3:501-2.)

A close examination reveals that through the addition of the title "Lehi's Travels," the accuracy of the original statement has been lost. Frederick G. Williams stated:

The course that Lehi traveled from the city of Jerusalem to the place where he and his family took ship, they traveled nearly a south southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of North latitude, then nearly east to the sea of Arabia then sailed in a south east direction and landed on the continent of South America in Chili [sic] thirty degrees south of lattitude [sic]. (Williams, After One Hundred Years, p. 103.)

There is no date and no explanation as to the source of the statement. However, three other items on the same piece of paper might help us find a date and/or the source: (1) a revelation about John the Beloved now found in Doctrine and Covenants, section 7; (2) the phrase "question asked in English and answered in Hebrew," followed by two lines of English and Hebrew, which could have been written during a number of Hebrew classes that Joseph and other brethren, including F G. Williams, attended during the

Kirtland period; (3) the phrase "Characters on the Book of Mormon" and the following characters and labels [see illustration below].

[1978 Illustration: Characters on Worksheet of Frederick G. Williams. Paul Cheesman, *The World of the Book of Mormon, SLC: Deseret Book, 1978, p. 22*]

This part of the document may be the most helpful in establishing a date. During July 1837, about two years after Joseph Smith received the papyri from which the Book of Abraham was taken, he agreed to let five men try to translate the papyri with whatever spiritual or secular powers they could individually muster. Each of these men (W. W. Phelps, Frederick G. Williams, Warren Parrish, Oliver Cowdery, and Willard Richards) eventually formulated partial lists of an Egyptian alphabet and grammar. (Hugh Nibley, *BYU Studies*, Summer 1971, pp. 359-93)

On one of the pages of the work done by Willard Richards are the same characters and explanation as those found on the aforementioned document by Williams, wherein we find the statement on Lehi's travels [see illustration below].

[1978 Illustration: Characters on Worksheet of Willard Richards. Paul Cheesman, *The World of the Book of Mormon, SLC: Deseret Book, 1978, p. 23*]

According to Dr. Hugh Nibley, these are the only sets of symbols he has seen with this particular interpretation. The exact correspondence of the characters and the interpretation suggest that Richards and Williams were collaborating in their work. The author therefore suggests a date of July 1837 for the document from which "Lehi's travels" was taken, since that was the month the five men were working on the papyri translation.

It is interesting that Nancy Williams, author of *After One Hundred years*, places the writing of "Lehi's Travels" chronologically between the dedication of the Kirtland Temple (March 27, 1836) and the birth of a son born to Emma and the Prophet July 20, 1836, whom they named Frederick G. Williams Smith. No explanation is given for the chronology. However, the following explanation was given for the event:

Frederick had in his pocket a piece of paper which he carried to take notes on. On this he wrote in pencil: "John the Beloved"--Then a space followed and a few lines written in another language. A large space followed and then at the bottom of the page he wrote the following revelation: [quotes statement on Lehi's travels].

Returning home he transcribed the revelation in ink on another sheet of paper. Rebecca kept these papers with his other notes until her death. Their son, Ezra, loaned them to the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City in 1860 where they have lain these many years, known only to historians, to be brought to light and published for the first time. (Williams, *After One Hundred Years*, pp. 101-3)

The question should be asked, From whom would Williams have gotten this idea on the direction of Lehi's travels? If it was not a revelation, not dictated by the Prophet, then we have the alternative that he himself wrote it, that he was dishonest, and that the Prophet knew nothing of the item. Do we have anything that would help us corroborate this statement?

The Book of Mormon does confirm the statement by Williams that Lehi's party journeyed along the Red Sea in nearly a south, southeast direction to the place Nahom, where Ishmael died, then nearly eastward until they came to the great sea. (1 Nephi 16:13; 17:1)

Statements made during the Prophet's life on the subject of Lehi's travels also support Williams. The Prophet wrote in the *Times and Seasons*, September 15, 1842:

When we read in the Book of Mormon that Jared and his brother came on to this continent from the confusion and scattering at the Tower, and lived here more than a thousand years, and covered the whole

continent from sea to sea, with towns and cities; and that Lehi went down by the Red Sea to the great Southern Ocean, and crossed over to this land, and landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien, and improved the country according to the word of the Lord, as a branch of the house of Israel, . . . we can not but think the Lord has a hand in bringing to pass his strange act, and proving the Book of Mormon true in the eyes of all the people." (Teachings, p. 267.)

After the death of the Prophet, his wife Emma had such high regard for Dr. John M. Bernhisel that she placed her deceased husband's revision of the Bible in his hands for three months and refused to allow Brigham Young or others to see it. Bernhisel copied the work and brought his copy with him to Utah in 1848. On the last page of what is now known as the Bernhisel manuscript, the following statement is found:

The course that Lehi traveled from the city of Jerusalem to the place where he and his family took ship. They traveled nearly a south southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of North Latitude then nearly East to the sea of Arabia then sailed in a south east direction and landed on the continent of South America in Chili thirty degrees south Latitude.

This statement appears to be in Bernhisel's handwriting. It is not dated, but the portion of manuscript that precedes it is dated June 5, 1845. It is interesting that this statement is the same as that of Frederick G. Williams--word for word. Also note that the words Chile and latitude are misspelled in both quotations. The evidence suggests a common source for these two quotations; yet John Bernhisel was in New York until 1843. He met the Prophet six years after Williams wrote his statement (if we are correct in our analysis).

It seems apparent that the course that Lehi traveled had nothing to do with Joseph's revision of the Bible. Where did the revision come from? Brother Bernhisel must have realized its importance as he was copying it. It seems unlikely he would have added anything that was not of the greatest interest to him or that was of doubtful authorship. An explanation has been suggested by Dr. Robert Matthews, professor of religion at BYU. It is possible that when Bernhisel returned the manuscript to Emma Smith, she showed him a slip of paper with the quotation on it (Joseph's study must have been full of interesting papers and documents), and Bernhisel, like many others, accepted this quotation as revelation.

[See the notations for 1830, 1836, 1837, 1842, 1845, 1865, 1866, 1882, 1988]

In a discourse delivered in the "Old Tabernacle" in Salt Lake City on December 27, 1868, Orson Pratt made the following comment on Lehi's route:

After the destruction of the Jaredites, the Lord brought two other colonies to people this land. One colony landed a few hundred miles north of the Isthmus on the western coast; the other landed on the coast of Chili, upwards of two thousand miles south of them. The latter were called the Nephites and Lamanites. (JD 12:342.)

. . . On February 11, 1872, he was even more specific:

By revelation from the Lord they [Lehi and his family] traveled southwest from the city of Jerusalem, and after reaching the Red Sea they continued along its eastern borders and afterwards bent their course eastward, arriving at the Indian Ocean. . . . [They were] guided by the Almighty across the great Indian Ocean. Passing among the islands, how far south of Japan I do not know, they came round our globe, crossing not only the Indian Ocean, but what we term the great pacific Ocean, landing on the western coast of what is now called South America. As near as we can judge from the description of the country contained in this record the first landing place was in Chili, not far from where the city of Valparaiso now stands. (JD 14:325)

The statement of the travels of Lehi was not included in the first edition of Richards and Little's Compendium, printed in England in 1857. In 1882, however, the book was reprinted in the United States and included the statement. It should be noted that Richards was a member of the Council of the Twelve at the time of the later printing, and he felt the statement was a revelation to the Prophet.

On November 1, 1959, at the Andes Mission headquarters in Lima, Peru, Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve offered the following insights on the subject:

. . . from the writings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and of other inspired men, it seems all are in agreement that the followers of Lehi came to the western shores of South America. . . .

I have recalled today that we are now very close to the center of some of the greatest Indian population in the world, and in all likelihood we may be near the place, in these two countries of Chili and Peru, where there has been a greater intermixture of Indian blood perhaps, than any other country on this continent. . . . I believe we are not far from the place where the history of the people of Lehi commenced in western America.

. . . As I look up and down the west coast of South America, I find very few seaports; and doesn't it seem likely to you that those who came here by ships directed by the Lord would be guided to a place where there was the most favorable landing? Where are the two most favorable seaports on the west coast? You know the answer to that question. Lima, Peru, and close by, Santiago, over on the west coast. . . .

(Quarterly Historical Report for the Andes Mission, November 1, 1959.)

Note* Interestingly, in my personal copy of Cheesman's book, there is a handwritten note at the top of the November 1, 1959 quote from Elder Harold B. Lee which reads as follows: "Pres. Kimball walking in coast, very strong impression it was shores of Vina Del Mar." To date, I have yet to find verifying documentation on this statement. But Vina Del Mar is very near Valparaiso on the map.

[1978^](#) [Ross T. Christensen](#)

"The Place Called Nahom," in the Ensign 8 (August 1978): p. 73.

Ross T. Christensen, Professor of Archaeology and Anthropology at Brigham Young University would be the first Latter-day Saint to find and correlate the area of Nehhm in Yemen with Nahom in the Book of Mormon. He writes:

Little mapping has been done in Arabia, however; detailed maps exist for only small parts of the land. Nevertheless, "the place called Nahom" may already have been found!

In 1763 Carsten Niebuhr prepared a map of Yemen (South Arabia or "Arabia Felix") as a major project of the scientific expedition sent out by King Frederick V of Denmark. The name "Nehhm" appears on that map. It was a small administrative district located among the mountain valleys some 100 miles east of Luhaiya and about 25 miles north of the capital, Sana. (See accompanying map; also Thorkild Hansen, Arabia Felix: the Danish Expedition of 1761-1767, 1964, pp. 232-33).

And what bearing does this have upon the route traced by Lynn and Hope Hilton? If the "Nehhm" of Niebuhr is accepted as the equivalent of "Nahom" of the Book of Mormon, then the discovery might confirm the general itineracy traced in the Hiltons' article. (See Ensign, Sept. 1976, ill. 7, p. 49.) Nehhm is only a little south of the route drawn by the Hiltons. Nehhm could thus be the place where Ishmael was laid to rest, where his daughters "did mourn exceedingly" (1 Ne. 16:35), and whence the caravan then turned eastward toward the Indian Ocean.

Perhaps the next step would be to invite semanticists to give their opinions as to whether Nahom and Nehhm are probable phonetic equivalents.

Another step would be to research for the name on maps other than Nieburhr's, even going back to

medieval and ancient ones, if any can be found.

Still another step--when the political situation allows--would be archaeological fieldwork. . . .

[1978 Map: Nehhm. Nehhm, located a little north of Sana, capital of modern Yemen (in southern Arabia), may be the Book of Mormon location, Nahom. If it is, then Lynn and Hope Hilton's 1976 tracing of Lehi's route across Arabia is confirmed--with a minor correction. Ross T. Christensen, "The Place Called Nahom," in the Ensign 8, August 1978, p. 73]

1978^ [Gordon H. Fraser](#) (anti-Mormon)

Joseph and the Golden Plates, USA: Gordon H. Fraser, 1978. pp. 33-35.

Gordon Fraser writes the following anti-Mormon commentary on the journey of Lehi:

Here are geographical and physical details that are inescapable as to their exact identity. The elapsed time of "three days" is obscure except that we would reason that the three days' journey was made after they had reached the Red Sea. It certainly would not have been possible for them to journey from Jerusalem to the Red Sea in three days, approximately 175 miles, with a party which included women and children and the old patriarch Lehi.

In order, eventually, to travel in the direction indicated in the Book of Mormon, they must have traveled along the east shore of the Gulf of Aqaba. Three days of good traveling would have brought them to a point about midway between the head of the gulf and its mouth. At this point they locate a river and a valley and stop for a time of refreshment.

The stubborn fact that we must face at this point is that there are no rivers running into the Red Sea at this or any other point. There are not even any traceable ancient river systems in this part of Arabia.

In other parts of Arabia there are only two traceable ancient river systems, the Wady Hadhramaut and the Wady Sirhan. These were dry long before 600 B.C., and were nearly two thousand miles distant from the supposed River Laman, and emptied into the Indian Ocean. Another traceable wady empties into the Persian Gulf which would be at least fifteen hundred miles remote from Nephi's presumed location.

Mormons, in their defense of this episode, will insist that there was a river at this place at the time of Lehi's journey. This is wishful thinking. This part of the world was well known and well traveled in 600 B.C. . . . The over-land spice trains would have passed through the area.

Had there been a river such as Nephi describes, the area would have been one of the best known of the world of its day and would have been occupied by a notable civilization, as always was the case where fresh water was available in even minor quantities. The mouth of such a river would have been a renowned world port, if not a capital city, in 600 B.C.

Wadis, such as exist in places along the shore of the Red Sea, are never more than washes that carry the run-off water from the very infrequent rain storms. They seldom run for more than a few hours, and rainstorms occur sometimes years apart. Nephi would scarcely have been confused into thinking that one of these washes was a river such as he describes.

The above is one of the provable blunders of the Book of Mormon. An implausible and highly improbable situation follows in the succeeding chapters of the book. . . .

The party of migrants finally leaves the River Laman and travels southward and eastward in a journey that occupies several years and would take them across the fourteen hundred or more miles of the Arabian Peninsula.

To make this transit, they would first have to cross several hundred miles of arid mountain ranges and then proceed over one thousand miles of the great Rub al Khali Desert where even the most intrepid nomad fears to travel. The very few oases that might have been encountered would have brought at least

some comment from the scribe, Nephi.

Having crossed the peninsula, Nephi relates that they came to the shore of a body of water (which could only have been the Persian Gulf), and here they encountered a fruitful land, which they named "Bountiful" because of its much fruit and wild honey.

Here, again, is a blunder of ignorance of known factors. The coastline of the Persian Gulf was utterly inhospitable and barren. Even Alexander's seasoned generals were unable or unwilling to negotiate this route three hundred years later. (notes 5, 6)

At this point Nephi is instructed to build a ship for passage to the New World, at a location probably more remote from shipbuilding timber than any place on the globe. The ship would have to be sufficiently seaworthy to negotiate a passage two-thirds of the distance around the world to the west coast of America. Such a task would have required special skills and considerably more manpower than was at the disposal of Nephi, even granting that the Lord is supposed to have indicated the design and other details of the ship.

We do not doubt the possibility or probability of migrations across the South Pacific. We do question the probability of its being accomplished by the method inferred in the Book of Mormon. All of the evidence of South Pacific migrations points to a method of island-hopping by Mongoloids, and possibly Australoids and Negroids, who left traces of their cultures and artifacts for anthropologists to discover in modern times. These crossings required generations rather than a few short years to accomplish, and there is no hint of a direct crossing by any route whatever by a party of Semites.

The improbability and implausibility of the supposed task is evident when it is pointed out that Nephi's party built their ship and made the crossing in less than three years with no more than six people cooperating, the rest of the party being involved in a violent mutiny.

[Note* See the notations concerning Potter and Wellington--1998, 2000, 2003]

1979[^] Church Educational System

Book of Mormon Student Manual Religion 121 and 122, Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, pp. 42, 44.

In 1979 the Church Educational System prepared a commentary for use in all its Religion 121-122 classes for the next 10 years. The following are all the commentaries regarding Lehi's journey:

(5-4) 1 Nephi 16:11-17. What Probable Route Did Lehi's Party Take to Cross the Arabian Desert?

It is reported that Joseph Smith said that Lehi's party "traveled nearly a south, southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude; then, nearly east to the Sea of Arabia." (Franklin D. Richards and James A. Little, A Compendium of the Doctrines of the Gospel, p. 272.

(p. 42)

[1979 Map: Lehi's Route through Arabia. Church Educational System, Book of Mormon Student Manual Religion 121 and 122, Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, p. 42]

(5-11) 1 Nephi 17:5, 6. What is a Possible Location of the Land Called Bountiful?

Though we have very little information to help us determine where Lehi's colony traveled, one writer tells us of a present location that could fit the description.

As Nephi described that land, it must have contained water, fruit, large trees for a ship, grass, wild

honeybees, flowers or blossoms, a mountain, a shoreline, a cliff overlooking the depths of the sea, and metal ore. Incredible as it seems, the south coast of the Arabian peninsula from Perim to Sur has only one place in its entire length of 1,400 miles that meets that description. It is a tiny sickle of land curved around a little bay, about 28 miles long and only 7 miles wide, backed by the Qara Mountains. For three months of the year, the monsoon clouds gather on the slopes fronting the sea and cover them with summer fog, mist, and rain. This place is Salalah, in the state of Dhofar, the Sultanate of Oman. The coast in both directions stretches away in unbroken barrenness. We repeat, this is the only place on the whole Arabian peninsula seashore which receives significant rainfall and where large trees grow--and it is known to have been this way for well over two thousand years. (Lynn M. and Hope A. Hilton, "In Search of Lehi's Trail: Part 1, The Preparation," Ensign, Sept. 1976, pp. 50-51.) . . .
(p. 44)

Note* There is no commentary for 1 Nephi 18:23, which tells of Lehi's landing in the Promised Land. It is extremely bewildering how the CES committee for writing this manual can see fit to quote half the statement attributed to Joseph Smith found in the Richards and Little Compendium in support of Lehi's travels through Arabia (see above), and then ignore the other half of the quote which tells of Lehi's voyage across the sea and landing site: "then [they] sailed in a southeast direction, and landed on the continent of South America, in Chile, thirty degrees south latitude." Was Book of Mormon geography an acceptable subject in the Old World and not the New World for CES? (See the 1968 notation for Daniel Ludlow)

1979 Ralph F. Lesh

"Lehi in the North Pacific: An Alternative to the Equatorial Route," in Zarahemla Record 4 (1979): pp. 3-4, 10.

A challenge to the view taken by the Committee on American Archaeology, appointed by the RLDS conference in 1894, that Lehi's ocean route was along the equator. Author argues for a route north of the equator, the Kuroshio or Japan Current, and believes that Lehi sailed north of Hawaii. The voyagers eventually landed in Guatemala or El Salvador.

Source: Daniel B. McKinlay, in Donald W. Parry, Jeanette W. Miller, Sandra A. Thorne, A Comprehensive Annotated Book of Mormon Bibliography. Provo, UT: Research Press, 1996, p. 263.

1980 Ralph F. Lesh

Ancient Mesoamerica: A Preliminary Study of Book of Mormon Geography, ndependence, MO: Zarahemla Research Foundation, 1980.

Large map of Central America showing the migration routes of the Book of Mormon peoples. Uses double arrows to indicate a northward direction as well as a true north to accommodate directions used in the Book of Mormon. Identifies the "Narrow Neck" with the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

Source: Jeanette W. Miller, in Donald W. Parry, Jeanette W. Miller, Sandra A. Thorne, A Comprehensive Annotated Book of Mormon Bibliography. Provo, UT: Research Press, 1996, p. 262.

[1980 Illustrated Model Ralph F. Lesh (RLDS) LIMITED MESOAMERICA]
L.S.=Mesoamerica S. & E. of Tehuan. / N.N.= Isth. of Tehuan. / L.N.=Mesoamerica N. & W. of Tehuan. / H.C.=In Veracruz, on Papaloapan River where it emerges from the mountains / Sid. R.=Usumacinta

Source: Ralph F. Lesh, Ancient Mesoamerica: A Preliminary Study of Book of Mormon Geography, Independence: Zarahemla Research Foundation, 1988. Also "Lesh discusses Development of the Map" in Recent Book of Mormon Developments: Articles from The Zarahemla Record, ed. by Raymond C. Treat, pp. 81-82, Independence: Zarahemla Research Foundation, 1984.

1980 Robert B. Ellsworth

"Lecture Notes on an Interpretation of a Map of Zarahemla and the Land Northward as Described in the Book of Mormon." Ogden, Utah, 1980. 17 photocopy pages, within thick paper covers.

[1980 Theoretical Model Robert B. Ellsworth LIMITED MESOAMERICA / INTERNAL]

L.S. = Costa Rica / N.N. = not specified (somewhere in Costa Rica) / L.N. = northern Costa Rica and southern Nicaragua (implied) / H.C. = Near the city of Rama, Nicaragua / Sidon = not indicated

Source: Robert B. Ellsworth, "Lecture Notes on an Interpretation of a Map of Zarahemla and the Land Northward as Described in the Book of Mormon." Ogden, Utah, 1980. 17 photocopy pages, within thick paper covers.