

The Liahona

Miracles by Small Means

Chapter 7

CHAPTER 7

Native American Writers

What Historical Writers on Native American Indians Have Said Concerning Indian Origins and a "Compass"

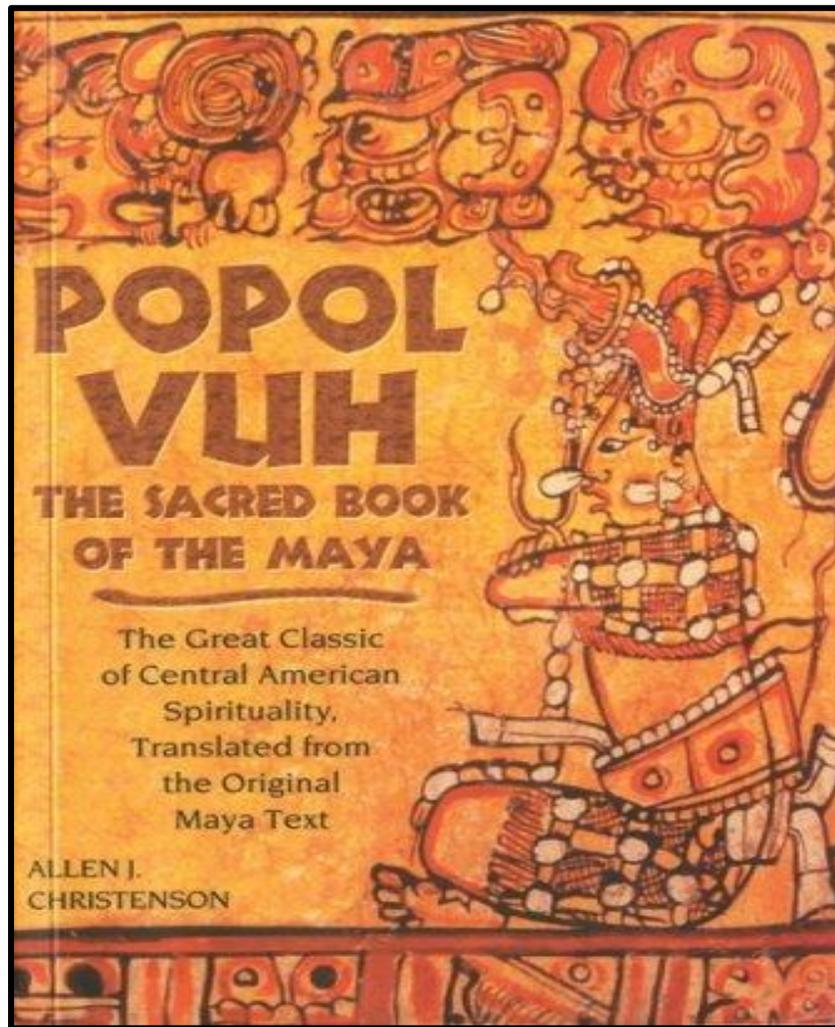
The question might be asked, does the history of the origins of the American Indians support the story of the Liahona? One might also ask to what extent that history was shaped by the historical writers that wrote about it. And then, ultimately, to what extent Joseph Smith was influenced by such writings--more specifically in his use of the word "compass" in his translation of the Book of Mormon narrative. In this section I will attempt to highlight what certain pertinent writers have said concerning American Indian origins and the use of a navigational instrument such as the magnetic compass. The time span ranges from the native accounts themselves to everything subsequent to the discovery of America by Columbus up to 1830 when the Book of Mormon was finally published.



The recording of native Maya codices

- (1) Their ancestors came across the sea
- (2) A Special instrument helped them navigate

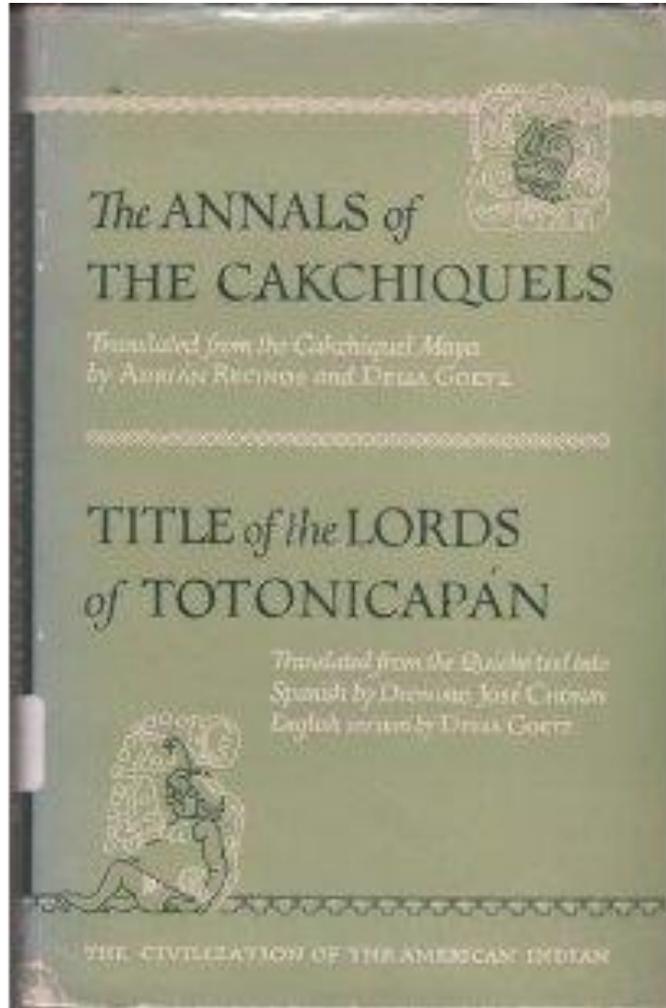
Despite the destruction of most all of the Native American documents, either by conquering Native nations or by conquering European nations, the few Native American documents that survived consistently refer to (1) Their original ancestors crossing a sea; and (2) Their original ancestors carrying with them a special navigating instrument.



Quiche Maya Indians of Guatemala

Special instrument called “**Pizom Gagal**”

The history of the Quiche (Maya) Indians of Guatemala is entitled the *Popol Vuh*. It was first translated in 1861. The text reads that after crossing the sea and just prior to the death of their original leaders, these leaders left their people with a gift from their god—the Pizom Gagal — a symbol of their god's power.



Cakchiquel Indians of Guatemala

Another history of the Maya Indians is *Title of the Lords of Totonicapán*. The text records that their "ancestors . . . had come from the other side of the sea" Prior to crossing the sea they received a gift from their god, which was called the Giron Gagal.

Special Instrument = “Chay-abah” or Obsidian Stone

Chay-abah really means “**Stone that Speaks**”

The historical origin of the Cakchiquel Indians of Guatemala is recorded in *The Annals of the Cakchiquels*. It was translated in 1855. In this history the special gift of god which helped their ancestors cross the sea was called "Chay-abah" or "Obsidian stone". But another translator says that the real meaning of "Chay-abah" is not "Obsidian stone" but really means "stone that speaks." Could the "stone that speaks" have referred to lodestone?