

(Lehi.1830 to 1920)

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A Detailed Chronology of LDS Thought on the Geography of Lehi's Journey from Jerusalem to the New World

1830-----> 1920

[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 (above): 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 (above): 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.

[1830](#)

[**The Book of Mormon is published**](#)

Note* The reader is referred to Volume 1 of my 9-volume The Covenant Record of Christ's People wherein the text of the Book of Mormon is highlighted in different manners to indicate all geographical and cultural phrases within the text relative to Lehi and Nephi's journey through Arabia and ultimately to the Promised Land. It should be noted, however, that cultural and geographical clues can be very subtle and so what I have highlighted should never be taken with any sense of finality.

1830^ (abt. Parley P. Pratt, Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Ziba Peterson & Frederick G. Williams)

"The Golden Bible, or Campbellism Improved," *Observer and Telegraph 1 (18 Nov. 1830), Hudson, Ohio.*

In a 2000 article by H. Michael Marquardt, he writes the following:

The earliest missionaries from New York to Ohio preached concerning the Book of Mormon. They were Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, Peter Whitmer, Jr., and Ziba Peterson. . . . The following excerpt is from a November 1830 newspaper article that mentions their visit to Ohio:

This new Revelation [the Book of Mormon], they say is especially designed for the benefit, or rather for the christianizing of the Aborigines of America; who, as they affirm, are a part of the tribe of Manasseh, and whose ancestors landed on the coast of Chili 600 years before the coming of Christ, and from them descended all the Indians of America.

Sources: ^H. Michael Marquardt, "Note on Early Book of Mormon Geography,"<http://www.xmission.com/~research/central/resth1b.htm>, 7/17/2002. Also a paper from Matt Roper, 01/31/04.

Note* William E. Berrett writes the following:

. . . When the missionaries departed from Kirtland to continue on to their original goal, they took with them Dr. Frederick G. Williams, a new convert. (^The Restored Church, SLC: Deseret Book, 1961, p. 77)

Note* This is an important find by Michael Marquardt because it represents the first known mention of Lehi landing in Chile. It has previously been thought that this concept originated with a revelation written down by Frederick G. Williams in 1836. (see the 1836 and 1845 notations) This opens up a discussion on just who might have been the source of this "coast of Chili" landing site for Lehi.

Of course, one always is drawn to the idea that Joseph Smith was the source, the thinking being that early members of the Church would have been hesitant to say anything that didn't come out of the prophet's mouth first. That might be a noble thought, but in this case there is no confirmatory evidence. At the present we fail to find one source where the prophet detailed Chili as the landing place of Lehi.

One might theorize that the source of this information can, for sure, be traced back to one of the first four men mentioned above as early as 1830. One could perhaps even narrow it down even further to Oliver Cowdery as he had been the closest to Joseph Smith and had taken part in the translation process. However Oliver Cowdery is not on record as saying anything on this subject either.

We next come to Parley P. Pratt. While we have numerous citations from Parley P. Pratt and his brother Orson Pratt that Lehi landed in Chili, they do not start to appear until 1851, a full 21 years after the initial citation. Furthermore, we find that in 1840, Parley's brother Orson went on record as saying that Lehi landed "on the western coast of South America" but did not specify anything about Chili. While we might assume that Parley talked on this subject with his brother Orson, we can't be sure, and then perhaps this was just an oversight by Orson. Whatever the case, it seems to weaken the case for Parley being the source. If we add to this the fact that Parley P. Pratt had recently been baptized by Oliver Cowdery "about the 1st of September, 1830 . . . in Seneca Lake" (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, SLC: Deseret Book, 1970, p. 42*), we would tend to think that Parley would look to Oliver as the authoritative voice in this matter and not speak on his own, but if we shift back to Oliver we hit the same dead-end. Furthermore, the fact that Parley or Orson were recorded later in print concerning Lehi's landing location does not prove that they were the source, only that they had access to a printing press.

Peter Whitmer, Jr. and Ziba Peterson are possibilities but neither of these men ever made any future commentary regarding Lehi's travels so that we have no sources to compare.

There is one more person here that should be considered. The above article was printed in the town of Hudson, Ohio. This town is about 30 miles southwest of Kirtland. This would imply that the missionary group had visited this town after they had preached to Sidney Rigdon's congregation in Kirtland. As noted above, after they visited Kirtland, Frederick G. Williams accompanied them. Thus we also must include him in the possibilities regarding the source of Lehi's landing "on the coast of Chili." While one might consider him the "junior" member of the group and prone to defer to the opinions of others, he was actually quite well established and educated, much more so than any in the group. He was a Doctor and had moved his family to Kirtland in 1828-29 to "go into the drug business and better practice medicine." (Nancy C. Williams, *Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams . . . After One Hundred Years. Independence: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1951, p. 54.*) In Kirtland he "prospered greatly and became influential as a Doctor and business man of means." When the missionaries had come to Kirtland, Frederick's wife Rebecca began to investigate and "took home the literature given to them at the meetings in order that she and the Doctor could sit late into the night studying it." (*Ibid.*, p. 55). When his wife was baptized, however, "Frederick was not quite ready. Cautiously he weighed the matter. He had read the Book of Mormon and had compared it to the Bible. Unwilling to accept its truth, he would lay it aside to have nothing more to do with it only to find himself later turning its pages and making comparisons and deductions." Thus by the time of his baptism and his missionary journey, the educated and prosperous Frederick G. Williams could have come to some theories of his own regarding the location of Lehi's landing in America from reading the text of the Book of Mormon and "comparisons and deductions." If we add to this the fact that of the whole missionary group, Frederick would be the only one in the ensuing years to make any written comment regarding Lehi's travels and landing location. The drawback to all this, of course is that Frederick's written source was a simple note kept in his own personal possession until his death. Even though Frederick Williams was set apart as second counselor to Joseph Smith in the First Presidency on March 18, 1833, and took an authoritative part in the Church for at least 4 years, we still fail to find any public pronouncements regarding Lehi's landing location up to the year 1842, when Williams died on October 10. Further clouding the issue is the fact

that just one month previous to this, in the Sept. 15, 1842 Times & Seasons, edited by John Taylor and Joseph Smith, Lehi was said to have landed "a little south of the Isthmus of Darien [Panama]."

But to all this discussion and probing for an authoritative source in this matter, perhaps we have overlooked the most obvious source--The Book of Mormon itself as it fell upon the Hemispheric mindset of the early members of the Church. When a reader first comes across a newspaper article dated to 1830 and mentioning "the coast of Chili" as the location of Lehi's landing, they might tend to regard this as so specific that it required an "authoritative" declaration. But was such really the case? For any reader of the Book of Mormon that focuses even generally on the geographic phrases in the text, some ideas become very apparent: (1) Lehi landed in the Land Southward; (2) the Land Southward was separated from the Land Northward by a Narrow Neck of Land; (3) the Land Southward was divided into two parts, a northward part called the Land of Zarahemla and a southern part called the Land of Nephi; and (4) the Land Southward was almost completely surrounded by water except for that Narrow Neck of Land on the north. Given these facts and a Hemispheric mindset, any reader would be prone to identify the Narrow Neck of Land as Panama (Isthmus of Darien) and the Land Southward as South America. Now if the text implies that Lehi landed in the southern part of the Land Southward (the Land of Nephi), and if the country of Chili occupies the ENTIRE southern coast of South America, then it would hardly have been any surprise or would have not caused any undue anxiety to the members of this missionary group if one of them stated to a newspaper reporter in Hudson, Ohio that Lehi landed somewhere "on the coast of Chili." Indeed that information could have come from any member of the missionary group, NOT as a revelation, NOT as an authoritative statement from Joseph Smith or Oliver Cowdery, but simply as a logical assumption from reading the text and having a decent knowledge of geography regarding the western hemisphere.

So in conclusion, students of Book of Mormon geography would do well to avoid making the comments in this article the result of some authoritative declaration, to say nothing of building an "authoritative" model of Book of Mormon geography upon it.

Note* As to the possibility that Joseph Smith was the originator of the idea that Lehi landed in Chile, in 1887 George Q. Cannon stated the following: "Joseph Smith told some of his followers, that the Magdalena River is the Book of Mormon river Sidon" and that Lehi and his family "landed near the Chilean city of Valparaiso." (see the 1887 notation). The reader, however, should find the notes under the 1836 notation quite revealing in this regard.

(See the notations for 1836, 1845, 1882, 1909, 1998)

[1830's Theoretical Model--HEMISPHERIC Lehi's Landing was in "Chili". South America = Land Southward, Straits of Darien (Panama) = Narrow Neck of Land, North America = Land Northward. Source: Joseph L. Allen, Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon, p. 185]

[1832^](#) [abt. Mormon Missionaries](#)

"Mormonism," *The Fredonia Censor* 11 (7 March 1832): [4], Fredonia, New York [From the Franklin (Pa.) Democrat.]

Mormonism

We of this place were visited on Saturday last by a couple of young men styling themselves Mormonites. They explained their doctrine to a large part of the citizens in the court house that evening. . . . The Revelation commenced about 600 years before Christ, with a prophet of the name of Lehi, of the tribe of Joseph, and a contemporary of the prophet Jeremiah, who had also warned the inhabitants of Jerusalem of their idolatry, & becoming unsafe in the city, was ordered by God to leave Jerusalem and journey toward the Red Sea. He with another family who accompanied him, built themselves a ship and landed on the coast of South America, where they increased very fast, and the Lord raised up a great many prophets among them. . . .

Mr. Editor--I have compiled the foregoing from memory. If you think it worth publishing, it will probably give some outline of the doctrine of this new sect.

Source: The above newspaper article was located on a recent trip by H. Michael Marquardt to New York in May 2000. <http://www.xmission.com/~research/central/resth1b.htm>, 7/16/2002.

Note* I do not know at present who these missionaries were, but it might be implied by the 1832 notation which follows that it was Orson Pratt and Lyman Johnston. The city of Fredonia, New York is located in the southwestern corner of New York just below Lake Erie, on the road between Buffalo, New York and Erie, Pennsylvania. This would be along a general route between Palmyra, New York and Kirtland, Ohio. By 1832 many of the saints had moved to Kirtland.

[1832](#) [B. Stokely](#)

"The Orators of Mormon," *Catholic Telegraph, Cincinnati, Ohio* 1/26, April 14, 1832

Mr. Printer--As the press is a medium through which to communicate information for public use, I have sent the following for that purpose-- B. Stokely

On Wednesday, the 8th of this month, two strangers called at my house and stated that they were sent by God to preach the gospel to every creature and said if a number should be convened they would deliver a discourse. On the question, what is your profession? They answered, the world call us Mormonites: this excited my curiosity, and at early candle light they commenced an address to the people convened. The substance for which I took down while they were speaking, and afterwards in conversation.

. . . Six hundred years before Christ a certain prophet called Lehi went out to declare and promulgate the prophecies to come; he came across the water into South America . . .

One of the young men called himself Lyman Johnston, form Portage, County, Ohio. The other was called Arson [sic] Pratt; no fixed place of abode. They were going North East, intending to preach the gospel to every kindred, tongue and nation. . . .

Source: ^Paper given to me by Matt Roper, Jan 23, 2004.

1833 [John N. Miller](#) (non-LDS)

John N. Miller Statement, "Conneaut, August, 1833. (Hurlbut Documents)

Matthew Roper writes:

In 1834, relying on testimony gathered by one Doctor Philastus Hurlbut (a former Mormon who had been excommunicated from the church for immoral behavior), E. D. Howe suggested that the Book of Mormon was based on an unpublished novel called "Manuscript Found," written by a former minister named Solomon Spalding. In statements collected by Hurlbut, eight former neighbors of Spalding said they remembered elements of his story that resembled the historical portions of the Book of Mormon. . . .

Roper notes that one of the eight statements was made in 1833 by John Miller. In that statement Miller claimed that Solomon Spalding, in explaining his unpublished novel to Miller and other associates, "landed his people near the Straits of Darien, which I am very confident he called Zarahemla, they were marched about the country for a length of time, in which wars and great blood shed ensued, he brought them across North America in a north east direction." [Miller, in E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painewville, OH: By the Author, 1834, p. 283.) Since the term "Straits of Darien" [Panama] does not appear in the Book of Mormon, one might ask where this idea came from.

Roper continues:

In early 1832, a year before Hurlbut joined the church, Orson Pratt and Lyman Johnson served a mission to the eastern states during which they passed through northwestern Pennsylvania. A newspaper correspondent in Mercer County, Pennsylvania described a cottage meeting in which Johnson and Pratt preached and gave a brief description of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the Nephite narrative. According to this report, the missionaries said that "the last battle that was fought among these parties was on the very ground where the plates were found but it had been a running battle, for they commenced at the Isthmus of Darien and ended at Manchester." ["The Orators of Mormon," Cincinnati, Ohio, Catholic Telegraph, 14 April 1832, emphasis in original.] which would, obviously, have them moving in a northeast direction, just as in John Miller's statement. Significantly, Pratt visited Springfield, Erie County, Pennsylvania, a year later, in 1833, and preached to a congregation there on 4 April 1833 [Zebedee Coltrin journal, 4 April 1833, typescript on New Mormon Studies CD-ROM (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998)] Hurlbut, then a recent convert serving a mission, was also in attendance at that meeting, although there is no record of him preaching [Zebedee Coltrin journal, 4 April 1833] Springfield is the very place where John Miller lived when he provided Hurlbut with a statement in September of that year. Did he hear Orson Pratt in Springfield or at least rumors of Pratt's preaching? While we cannot be certain, the similarity in language suggests that, later that year, in his statement to Hurlbut, Miller attributed these popularized missionary views to Spalding's "Manuscript Story." It is also highly probable that Hurlbut as a missionary would have been familiar with these ideas and themes—we know that he heard Orson Pratt speak in person at least once, and Pratt's geographical speculations would probably have been circulating in the small Mormon community of the time—and it may well be that Hurlbut himself prompted Miller to think of Darien and related matters. Either possibility could account for the geographical reference without the need to see it as evidence for a [Spalding] manuscript [claimed by Hurlbut to be the source of the Book of Mormon]. More important, attribution of this geographic view to the Book of Mormon suggests that Miller's statement is not based on careful examination of the Book of Mormon text but is, instead, based on extemporized missionary discussions, local rumor, newspaper accounts, or some combination of the three. Since Hurlbut was responsible for gathering the Spalding statements, we have to wonder about Hurlbut's possible influence on the structure, language, and content of those 1833 testimonies concerning Spalding.

Source: Matthew Roper, "The Mythical 'Manuscript Found': Review of *Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon? The Spalding Enigma* by Wayne L. Cowdrey, Howard A. Davis, and Arthus Vanick. *FARMS Review*, vol. 17, Issue 2, 2005, pp. 7-140.

Note* While Chile had before been presented as the place where Lehi initially landed (see the 1830 reference), and even though Miller's statement only indirectly refers to the Book of Mormon, this is the first time that anyone ever implied that Lehi "landed his people near the Straits of Darien, which I am

very confident he called Zarahemla." This statement is strange because it does not correlate with the actual text of the Book of Mormon. First of all, Lehi didn't land in Zarahemla, Lehi died shortly after the initial landing and was not the leader of the migration to Zarahemla.

From another perspective, this statement reads as if someone is trying to compress the story of Nephite migration up until they reached Zarahemla. In other words, despite the fact that Lehi died shortly after landing, the phrase might mean that after a migration after landing (or from the land of Nephi) the people of Lehi "landed" "near the Straits of Darien" (or Zarahemla).

Also note how similar this statement is to that which appears in the September 15, 1842 Times & Seasons edited by John Taylor (see the 1842 reference). In that issue he remarks, "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" Here again, someone has Lehi landing near the Isthmus of Darien. But again, Lehi did not "improve the county" very much but rather died shortly after landing. The country was not significantly improved until Nephi migrated to the land of Nephi, and later when Mosiah migrated to Zarahemla. Yet because of the similarities between the statement of John Miller and John Taylor, one has to wonder who the source of their information was. Were the facts in both stories related originally to a brief synopsis of the Book of Mormon presented repeatedly by Orson Pratt, Parley Pratt, Oliver Cowdery, or some other missionary in his travels and sermons?

[1834^](#) [E. D. Howe](#) (non-LDS)

Mormonism Unveiled, Painesville, OH: By the Author, 1834, p. 283

See the 1833 John Miller notation.

[1836^](#) [Frederick G. Williams](#) (Lehi's Travels" statement)

Notes from the School of the Prophets, January - March, 1836?

Frederick G. Williams III (a great-great-grandson of the original Williams) writes that from the earliest days of the Church, the site of Lehi's landing in the New World has been a topic of discussion. Much of the debate has centered around the origin of a document (see copy below) from which the following is written by Frederick G. Williams:

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.

[1836 Illustration: Frederick G. Williams Document. (LDS Archive, Ms d 3408 fd 4 v, SLC, Utah).
Source: Frederick G. Williams III, "Did Lehi Land in Chile?": An Assessment of the Frederick G. Williams Statement," FARMS, 1988, Document 1]

This document has four items separated by lines drawn across the page:

(1) The first item on the sheet, known today as D&C 7, is a transcript of the revelation given in 1829 to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery regarding John the Beloved (published in 1833 in the Book of Commandments).

(2) The second item is entitled "Questions in English, Answers in Hebrew." This section contains statements taken word for word from the end of Jacob 5:13 and Jacob 7:27. Below each statement are a couple of lines labeled "An[swer]" in rough Hebrew.

(3) The third item is titled "Characters on the Book of Mormon." Two phrases follow: "The Book of Mormon" on the left, and "The Interpretation of Languages" on the right. Under each phrase are two characters.

(4) The statement concerning Lehi's travels.

Unfortunately, the origin of the Lehi's Travels statement is unclear. Some traditions have held that Joseph Smith or Frederick G. Williams received it through revelation [see the 1836 Nancy Williams notation and the 1882 Franklin D. Richards notation], and on that assumption, the statement has been used to support a Chilean landing of Lehi's party. However, the relevant primary documents, particularly the page on which the original Frederick G. Williams statement is found, give no evidence of a revelatory origin.

According to Williams III, in addition to the Frederick G. Williams document, one other small paper is relevant to the question of where and why the Williams document was written. Two of the items on the front of the Frederick G. Williams sheet appear on another early document, written in what clearly appears to be the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery. (see copy below) Oliver's paper contains the four Book of Mormon characters (section 3 above) and the Questions in English--Answers in Hebrew (section 2 above). These items appear exactly as in the Williams copy, except the above two items are not separated from each other by a line and the characters have no heading labeling them as Book of Mormon characters. Oliver's page contains an additional statement which reads: "Written & Kept for profit & learning By Oliver."

[1836 Illustration: Oliver Cowdery Document. (LDS Archive, Ms d 3408 fd 4 v, SLC, Utah).]

Source: Frederick G. Williams III, "Did Lehi Land in Chile?": An Assessment of the Frederick G. Williams Statement," FARMS, 1988, Document 2]

Williams III asks,

"What can we learn from the collection of items on Williams' sheet? Why would Frederick G. Williams copy a revelation which had already been published twice (D&C 7)? Why would he write the Questions and Answers, and the Book of Mormon characters? Why did Oliver Cowdery also have a copy of the most enigmatic items? . . ."

Williams III then proposes the following explanation:

It may be that on this sheet Frederick G. Williams brought together several items that were being discussed in the School of the Prophets, which was held at times in the Kirtland Temple in 1836--the same time as the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. They may have been part of the Hebrew lessons given from January to March 1836, or of a challenge to translate ancient languages by the power of God, if possible, or by hard work. . . . The fact that both Williams and Oliver Cowdery participated in these lessons may explain why both had a copy of the Questions and Answers section and the Book of Mormon characters. . . .

The Lehi statement, then, may have been an idea discussed or presented by Joseph Smith or another speaker at the School of the Prophets, and was an idea that Frederick G. Williams found interesting enough to jot down on the paper he had with him as he took notes in that setting.

Source: ^Frederick G. Williams III, "Did Lehi Land in Chile?": An Assessment of the Frederick G. Williams Statement," FARMS, 1988, pp. 1-3, 9-13.

Note* The idea that Joseph Smith was responsible for everything that came out of the School of the Prophets has come under scrutiny in recent years and some of the findings might relate to the Lehi's Travels statement apparently discussed in the school, recorded by Frederick G. Williams, and later attributed to Joseph Smith as a revelation. Perhaps this new perspective can best be seen in some recent commentary concerning the Lectures on Faith, one of the most important set of teachings to come out of the School of the Prophets. In the Preface and back-cover to a recent edition of this book we find the following:

These seven lectures were originally prepared in connection with the school of the elders in Kirtland, Ohio, and were subsequently published as part of the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. . . . They were deemed of such doctrinal worth that they were published in Latter-day Saint

scripture from 1835 to 1921 as the forepart of the Doctrine and Covenants. In fact, these lectures were considered the "doctrine" while the revelations made up the "covenants" of that inspired book. . . . Over the years, an ongoing scholarly debate has attempted to discern the lectures' author. Many have desired to attribute the writing to Joseph Smith, either directly or under his careful approval. But while it is clear that the Prophet gave his consent to the 1835 publication, it is a far more complicated matter to determine his level of involvement in or acceptance of the lectures themselves. There is strong evidence to indicate that at least the majority of the writing was undertaken by Sidney Rigdon, who was then a member of the First Presidency. (^Lectures on Faith, American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2000, preface & back-cover)

Note* Dale Broadhurst notes that there is certain specific language in the Lehi's Travels statement that might be a clue to its origin:

Considering how specific this statement is -- giving the degree of latitude for both the location where Lehi set sail ["the nineteenth degree of north latitude"] and the place where he landed [in Chili, thirty degrees south latitude] -- it seems much more likely that it was the inspiration of Orson Pratt than of Joseph Smith. Orson was one of the original Mormon apostles, an intelligent man who was interested in mathematics, astronomy, and surveying. In his biography of Orson Pratt, Breck England says that Orson was in Kirtland, Ohio, in October 1836: "Business left Orson with some leisure for study, and he relished the winter hours with his copy of 'Day's Algebra' and his astronomy readings. . . . Spurred by his mathematical exercises and his former acquaintance with surveying, he became interested in astronomy, musing on the stars with the new measuring tools made available to him in 'Day's Algebra'" (England 1985, 49). When the Mormons later made their trek from Illinois to Utah, it was Orson who measured the longitude and latitude of the route which they used. (^Dale Broadhurst, "Book of Mormon Geography: Early Interpretations," <http://Home1.gte.net/dbroadhu/rest/splinks.htm>, p. 3)

Note* Laying aside the question of revelation in regards to the Lehi's Travels statement, let me make a few comments on the practical aspect of its content. If Lehi came to "the nineteenth degree of north latitude," then "nearly east to the Sea of Arabia," he might have some major obstacles. It would all depend on the interpretation of the words, "Nearly east to the Sea of Arabia." First of all, the nearest town of any consequence to the 19th degree parallel is Al Qunfidhah on the coast of the Red Sea (see map below). From this point there is no major road leading directly east, and even if there were, one would be traveling directly over the Asir Mountains and then directly through "The Empty Quarter," reaching the point Ras Madrakah on the Arabian Sea. This is something which is not reasonable to expect.

On the other hand, if one were to continue following the coastal road beyond Al Qunfidhah there is a gradual swing eastward along a known road over the Asir Mountains to the town of Najran and then

skirting the southern end of The Empty Quarter. Although it is approximately 200 miles towards Najran until the road goes directly eastward, the phrase "nearly east to the Sea of Arabia" would be completely acceptable here. This route would later be examined and detailed by the Hiltons in 1976 (see the 1976 notation). So from a strictly scientific sense, the Lehi's Travels statement would not be out of line for Lehi's travels through Arabia. Whether this information was available to Frederick G. Williams in 1836 is unknown.

[1836 Map: Possible Routes from the 19th Parallel "nearly eastward to the Sea of Arabia." Geoprojects 1980. The Oxford Map of Arabia. Great Britain: Cook, Hammond & Kell, Mitcham, Surrey, 1980.]

[1836^](#) [Nancy C. Williams](#) (abt. Frederick G. Williams) ("Lehi's Travels" statement)
Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams . . . After One Hundred Years (Independence: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1951), pp. 55-56, 99-102.

According to the theory of Nancy Williams, who was the wife of a grandson of Frederick G. Williams, the origin of the Frederick G. Williams document, and more especially the statement on Lehi's Travels was the result of a revelation during the Kirtland Temple dedication on March 27, 1836. She writes:

The result was that he [Frederick G. Williams] too saw the light and shortly after, during the same months of October 1830, he followed Rebecca's [his wife's] example and was baptised, confirmed and ordained an elder under the hands of Oliver Cowdery, Parley P. Pratt, Peter Whitmer Jr., and Ziba Peterson. . . .

Almost immediately after the baptism and ordination of Frederick, the Elders began preparations for the Indian (or Lamanite) Mission and they asked him to accompany them for three weeks. He was so well acquainted with the places and people with whom they could meet in that length of time that it seemed a real opportunity. The Book of Mormon had revealed to him the true identity of the American Indians and surrounded as they were by that benighted race the urge was great in him to introduce them to their ancestors and teach them the gospel as contained in its sacred pages. . . . [pp. 55-56]

Sunday, March 27th, 1836: Auspicious day! The House of the Lord completed! The first Temple to be built in this dispensation! . . . And now, the day of Dedication had arrived! . . .

After the dedicator prayer, singing and the administration of the Lord's Supper, Don Carlos Smith and President Cowdery arose and bore their testimonies. President Williams then arose and testified that while President Rigdon was making his first prayer an angel entered the window and took his seat between Father Smith and himself and remained there during the prayer. (see History of the Church, Vol. II, p. 427.)

Heber C. Kimball related it thus: "During the ceremonies of the dedication an angel appeared and sat near Joseph Smith Sen., and Frederick G. Williams, so that they had a fair view of his person. He was tall, had black eyes and white hair and stooped shoulders and his garment was whole, extending to near his ankles, on his feet he had sandals. He was sent as a messenger to accept of the dedication. (see Whitney's Life of Heber C. Kimball, p. 103)

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."

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 the 1860's where they have lain these many years, known only to historians, to be brought to light and published for the first time. [see note #1]

Apostle George A. Smith records that "on the first day of the dedication, President Frederick G. Williams, one of the Council of the Prophet, and who occupied the upper pulpit, bore testimony that the Savior dressed in His vesture without seam, came into the stand and accepted of the dedication of the House; that he saw Him and he gave a description of His clothing and all things pertaining to it." (Journal of Discourses, Vol. XI, p. 10; Doc. & Cov. Comm. p. 726.)

Note #1: According to Nancy Williams, the original, written in pencil was shown to the author by a Historian, in the early 1930's, and was the only one she had seen until February 29, 1949, when she was shown the film and the letter from which it was taken--and received with others a wonderful manifestation that it was indeed a revelation given to Frederick G. Williams for him and his family. The original, written in pencil, cannot be found at this writing.

Note #2: In a paper concerning the Frederick G. Williams document, Frederick G. Williams III notes the following:

Nancy Williams gives no source for the idea that the statement was received at the Kirtland Temple dedication. Moreover . . . Assistant Church Historian W. Lund, in writing to Joseph Fielding Smith after her 1949 visit, said that he had never seen a pencil copy and that the only copy is in ink. He also said that he had tried to dissuade her from believing the statement was a revelation because the text does not identify it as such. (Letter in LDS Archives) It should also be noted that pencil documents of the period such as the one Nancy Williams described are very

rare. (Frederick G. Williams III, "Did Lehi Land in Chile?": An Assessment of the Frederick G. Williams Statement," FARMS, 1988, pp. 8-9.)

Note* This information on Frederick G. Williams's Lehi's Travels statement and the previously proposed scenario by Broadhurst linking Orson Pratt to the "latitude" portion of this statement sets the stage for some needed discussion concerning the "latitude" aspect of the Lehi's Travels statement--that is, how the "latitude" details of this statement might tie into the other early brethren of the Church.

Broadhurst's theory is specifically tied to the fact that Orson Pratt was scientifically intelligent concerning longitude and latitude, and that he was in Kirtland in October, 1836. We might add to this the possibility that Orson could have conveyed this longitude and latitude information to his brother Parley and between them they could have originated the "latitude" ideas in the Lehi's Travel statement. Yet we find upon searching that nothing is ever mentioned or implied on "latitude" by either Orson Pratt or Parley Pratt until the year 1866 when Orson associated Lehi's landing with the city of Valparaiso, Chile. Interestingly, Valparaiso happens to be located on the 33rd degree south latitude rather than the 30th degree south latitude as found in the Lehi's Travels statement, yet no specific reason is given for why Lehi landed there. Furthermore Orson and Parley Pratt should not be considered exceptional in any knowledge of longitude and latitude for their day for these concepts were taught in the geographical primers of the day (see the 1824 Morse notation). One example of this knowledge can be found in W.W. Phelps' article, "The Far West" in Evening and Morning Star, vol. 1, October, 1832. In this article Phelps describes the Missouri river as "running rapidly from the 48th to the 39th degree of north latitude." Thus there are real problems in crediting Orson Pratt or his brother Parley with the "latitude" information in the Lehi's Travels statement.

Now let us turn to Joseph Smith and Frederick G. Williams with regards to "latitude." Frederick G. Williams is presumed to have had access to the "latitude" information by 1836 because (1) it was written on a document containing other writings associated with the Kirtland School of the Prophets (1834-1836) including a 1929 revelation (D&C 7); (2) Frederick G. Williams was scribe to Joseph between the years 1832 to 1837; and (3) Nancy Williams, the wife of Frederick Williams' grandson, claims that the Lehi's Travels statement was written down by him at the time of the Kirtland Temple dedication (1836) and that his wife Rebecca kept these papers until her death.

The problem with this line of reason, however, is that in searching upon these facts we find that during and after those years nothing regarding "thirty degrees south latitude" is ever specifically mentioned with respect to Lehi's journey by either man. On the contrary, in the September, 1842 Times & Seasons, edited by John Taylor and Joseph Smith, Lehi was said to have landed "a little south of the Isthmus of Darien." Sadly, Frederick Williams died on October 10, 1842.

The next person that was involved with the "latitude" portion of the Lehi's Travels statements was John Bernhisel. (The reader should find an extended discussion concerning him in the 1845 notation.) In 1845 Bernhisel made a partial copy of Joseph Smith's "new translation" of the Bible. A century later, while Robert Matthews was making a study of the Bernhisel manuscript, he found an undated note on

the last page, completely separate from the rest of the text, which essentially was a copy of the Williams's Lehi's Travels statement. There is, at the present, the possibility that Bernhisel copied this information from Joseph Smith's notes in 1845 when he copied the rest of the "new translation." There is also the possibility that Bernhisel got the information from a source related to the Frederick Williams document, but Bernhisel did not arrive in Nauvoo until 1843 and Frederick G. Williams died in 1842. There is also the possibility that Bernhisel did not enter his note until after 1865 when Williams' documents were turned over to the LDS Church and before 1879 when the Church gained access to the Bernhisel manuscript.

In 1948 John E. Page, a former member of the Quorum of the Twelve (but now excommunicated and following James Strang), wrote that Lehi landed "on the Pacific side of the southern part of Central America." This statement seems to imply that Page either had never heard of Lehi landing at "thirty degrees south latitude" or that he regarded that information as only someone's opinion.

In 1865, Joseph F. Smith, a future member of the Council of the Twelve, wrote a note (Personal Letterbooks) in which he detailed the Lehi's Travels statement ("latitude") and then said that it had been copied from F. G. Williams own handwriting. What should be noted here is that sometime during the early 1860s, Ezra Williams, the son of Frederick G. Williams had loaned his father's papers (presumably those saved by Frederick's wife Rebecca) to the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City. At this time there still had not been any published statement mentioning "latitude" with regards to Lehi's travels or landing site. Thus it might be implied that this was the first time that knowledge of "latitude" had been associated with Lehi's landing site within the LDS Church.

In 1866 Orson Pratt commented on Lehi's travels and landing site, but failed to specifically mention "latitude." However he did note that Lehi landed "not far from where now stands the city of Valparaiso, in Chili." This was the very first time that anyone had associated the city of Valparaiso with Lehi's landing site. Interestingly Valparaiso is situated close to 33 degrees south latitude. Whether Orson Pratt obtained "latitude" information from his fellow Quorum of the Twelve member Joseph F. Smith and then consulted a map for the nearest possible port location is not known but might be a possibility. However, 33 degrees south latitude is not "thirty degrees south latitude" as specified in the Lehi's Travels statement.

It would not be until 1882 that the "latitude" information would specifically be published in Richards and Little's Compendium as part of the Lehi's Travels statement (see the 1882 notation). Richards and Little would attribute the quote to a "Revelation to Joseph the Seer." [At present I have not checked the full article to see what they wrote about the source of the Lehi's Travels statement. Did they link it to Frederick G. Williams?] They offer no facts to substantiate the claim that it was a "Revelation to Joseph the Seer," and nothing we have just reviewed substantiates such a statement either, especially when one focuses on the "latitude" phrases in the quote. Such absence of proof (including early diary entries?) does not speak well for a proposed "Revelation" to Joseph Smith.

Thus it appears that we can't establish who exactly it was who first ascribed latitude to the Lehi's Travels statement because of (1) the unknown number of authoritative men in the early Church who

were able to position geographical locations by this method using the geographical maps and primers of the day; and (2) the lack of any published comments by these early authoritative men that specifically mention "thirty degrees south latitude." What does seem plausible is that Frederick G. Williams wrote some personal notes on "latitude" and Lehi's travels and kept these notes in his personal possession. From what source Bernhisel obtained his information still remains a puzzle. What seems remote, especially when "latitude" is considered, is that the Lehi's Travels statement was ever a true "Revelation."

(See the notations for 1830, 1837, 1842, 1845, 1865, 1866, 1882, 1978, 1988)

Note* One more bit of information concerning the Lehi's Travels statement should be discussed. This involves the specific idea that after arriving at the Sea of Arabia, Lehi's party sailed in a "south, southeast direction." However I have a hard time deciding whether this phrase was a confirmation to the idea that Lehi landed in Chile or simply a result of that thinking--being a convenient directional sea route that Lehi could have followed in order to land on the western coast of Chile in South America.

[1837^](#) ([abt. Frederick G. Williams](#)) (Lehi's Travels" statement)

Paul Cheesman, *The World of the Book of Mormon, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978., pp. 22-23*

Paul Cheesman adds the following insights on the date and circumstances under which Frederick G. Williams might have recorded the Lehi's Travels statement:

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].

[1837 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].

[1837 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.

(See the notations for 1830, 1836, 1842, 1845, 1865, 1866, 1882, 1978, 1988)

Note* In his "Review of Proposed Norman & Sorenson Book of Mormon Geography Correlations" (Wichita Kansas, August 1975, p. Forward, p. i), Robert F. Smith writes:

The Williams "revelation" is intriguing for a very special reason. To be dated certainly before the death of Williams (10 Oct 1842), it contains "characters" and translation immediately above the disputed passage which, I believe, could only have been made by a person who had actually seen the Book of Mormon plates (or transferred from a document which had authentic Book of Mormon characters upon it) since the epigraphy of the Egyptian demotic word for "book," md3t, below the English word "Book," can be most clearly dated to the early form common in and around the reign of Pharaoh Ich-mose II (570-525 B.C.)--Rylands Papyrus VI, D, 1, cited in W. Erichsen, *Auswahl frundemotischer Texts*, p. 108b (cf. Pyr. 267 b; CT 225, III 240/1b).

That Williams may have been copying much earlier Church documents is shown by the existence of a fragment in the LDS Church Historian's Office, in the hand of Oliver Cowdery, having thereon the very same English "translation" for the same "characters" from the Book of

Mormon. Cowdery's period within the Church thus dates that document to between April 1829 and April 1838, and probably to the early part of that period (T&S II:201; JS. 2:66-8).

[1837^ Parley P. Pratt](#)

"The Book of Mormon--Origin of the American Indians, Etc.," in A Voice of Warning, New York, 1837, p. 135. (Reprinted & Published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press)

But what are the evidences which we gather from scripture concerning the coming forth of this glorious work? We shall attempt to prove, first, that America is a land promised to the seed of Joseph; second, that the Lord would reveal to them his truth as well as to the Jews; and third, that their record should come forth, and unite its testimony with the record of the Jews, in time for the restoration of Israel in the last days.

First, Genesis 48, Jacob, while blessing the two sons of Joseph says, "Let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." In the same blessing it is said of Ephraim, "His seed shall become a multitude of nations." Now put the sense of these sayings together, and it makes Ephraim a multitude of nations in the midst of the earth. In Genesis 49, it is prophesied concerning Joseph, while Jacob was blessing him that he should be "a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength." Again, he further says, "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." Now, I ask, who were Jacob's progenitors and what was the blessing they conferred upon him? Abraham and Isaac were the progenitors, and the land of Canaan was the blessing they conferred upon him, or that God promised them he should possess. Recollect that Jacob confers on Joseph a much greater land than that of Canaan: even greater than his fathers had conferred upon him, for Joseph's blessing was to extend to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. Now, reader, stand in Egypt, where Jacob then stood, and measure to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills, and you will land somewhere in the central part of America. Again, one of the prophets says, in speaking of Ephraim, "When the Lord shall roar, the children of Ephraim shall tremble from the west." Now let us sum up these sayings, and what have we gained? First, that Ephraim was to grow into a multitude of nations in the midst of the earth; second, Joseph was to be greatly blessed in a large inheritance, as far off as America; third, this was to be on the west of Egypt or Jerusalem. [pp. 73-77]

Note* Here Parley P. Pratt preaches that the seed of Joseph (Lehi's party) traveled "over the wall" to America, but there is no real citation as to the route or the landing place. While America ("the utmost bound of the everlasting hills") is identified from scripture as Lehi's Land of Promise, the reference to

"the central part of America" does not necessarily mean Central America but more probably the location of the "everlasting hills" as running from north to south through the "center" of the entire hemisphere. In 1851 Parley P. Pratt would identify Lehi's landing place to be "on the western coast of America, within the bounds of what is now called 'Chili'."

[1840^](#) [Orson Pratt](#)

A Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions, and of the Late Discovery of Ancient American Records, Edinburgh: Printed by Ballantyne and Hughes, 1840. pp. 15-21

About 1838 Orson Pratt wrote a pamphlet entitled "Remarkable Visions," which subsequently went through multiple editions. Commenting on Lehi's journeyings he wrote:

The remnant of Joseph were also led in a miraculous manner from Jerusalem, in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah. 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 south-east direction; after which, they altered their course nearly eastward, until they came to the great waters, where, by the commandment of God, they built a vessel, in which they were safely brought across the great Pacific ocean, and landed upon the western coast of South America.

Note* It is interesting that although Orson Pratt here identifies the landing site as the western coast of South America, he fails to mention Chile. Moreover, he mentions nothing about Lehi turning eastward at the nineteenth degree north latitude or Lehi landing at the 30th degree south latitude as noted in the Lehi's Travels statement. This is significant in view of the fact that Orson Pratt could be viewed by some as the originator of such ideas.

Note* Since Orson Pratt was to become a prolific writer and editorial force in the Church during the decades following 1840, it would be good here to review how he might have obtained his knowledge, especially as it might pertain to Book of Mormon geography. In an article entitled "Defender of the Faith," Milton V. Backman, Jr. has this to say about Brother Pratt:

Immediately after learning about the restoration from his brother Parley, and believing that the doctrines and powers of the restored Church harmonized with that of New Testament Christianity, he united with the Latter-day Saints. He was baptized by his brother on 19 September 1830, five months following the organization of the Church. On that memorable day, he celebrated his nineteenth birthday. A few weeks later, Orson traveled two hundred miles westward to meet Joseph Smith. He found the young prophet residing at the Peter Whitmer farmhouse in Fayette, New York. This meeting was the beginning of a close relationship between a modern Prophet and a devout disciple. . . .

Although Elder Pratt spent most of his early years as a Latter-day Saint in the mission field, when he was not serving as an itinerant preacher he usually lived near the home of Joseph Smith. In February 1831, for example, he moved to Kirtland, where he resided near the Prophet's home until the summer of that year. In December 1831, he traveled to Hiram, Ohio, where he was instructed by the Prophet. . . . In February, March, September, and October 1833 (between missions to New England), he boarded in the home of the Prophet. In that year, Joseph and his family lived in a small apartment which had been built on the second floor of the Newel K. Whitney and company store. . . .

During his first boarding experience with Joseph Smith, he attended the School of the Prophets. Commenting on that experience, he said he received at that time "much good instruction."

Orson Pratt had many other close contacts with Joseph Smith during the mid-1830s. On 26 April 1834, he copied revelations for the Prophet. In May and June of that year, he traveled almost nine hundred miles between northeastern Ohio and the Missouri frontier with Joseph Smith and other members of Zion's Camp. . . .

Although his call to the apostleship led to repeated service in the mission field, his contacts with the Prophet continued. Early in 1836 he not only attended school in the Kirtland Temple and studied Hebrew with Joseph Smith, but also received in that House of the Lord a special endowment, a gift of knowledge and power that prepared him to be a more effective ambassador of the Lord.

Following the exodus of the Saints from Kirtland and the expulsion of Latter-day Saints from Missouri, Elder Pratt met Joseph Smith on 21 December 1839, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. On that occasion, Orson was enroute to the British Isles. . . . Before sailing for England, Orson Pratt probably was taught many doctrines of the kingdom that had not previously been emphasized by the Prophet. . . [on] 9 March 1840, . . . Orson Pratt began the first of sixteen crossings of the Atlantic. . . . While serving nine months as a missionary in Edinburgh, Scotland, Orson Pratt published his first missionary tract. This thirty-one page pamphlet, printed in September 1840, was entitled *An Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions, and of the late Discovery of Ancient American Records*. . . . After securing a copy of this work, Elder Orson Hyde, another apostle who was a close associate of Joseph Smith, verified the accuracy of this publication by translating it (with only few modifications) into German. [^Milton V. Backman, Jr., "Defender of the Faith," in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History*, Provo: BYU Department of Church History and Doctrine, 1992, pp. 34-38]

[1841^ Benjamin Winchester](#)

"The Claims of the Book of Mormon Established--It Also Defended," in The Gospel Reflector 1 (15 March 1841): pp. 105-23.

The author defends the belief that the American Indian belonged to the house of Israel. In comparing the "History of the Ancients of America, and Also of the Book of Mormon," he writes:

Six hundred years B.C. according to the Book of Mormon, Lehi . . . fled into the wilderness. He pitched his tent in the wilderness near the Red Sea After a long and tedious journey, they came to the great waters, or the Ocean. . . . They set sail, and in proper time landed as we infer from their records somewhere on the western coast of South America. . . .

Note* Again, there is no reference here to "thirty degrees south latitude."

[1841^](#) [Charles B. Thompson](#)

Evidences in Proof of the Book of Mormon Being a Divinely Inspired Record, Batavia, NY: D. D. Waite, 1841, p. 95.

He writes:

[Lehi's colony] went in to the borders of the wilderness near the shore of the Red sea . . . and after wandering in the wilderness for the space of eight years, they came to the sea which they called Irreantum, which being interpreted is, many waters; the same I presume that is now called the Arabian sea. There they built a ship according to the instructions which God gave them, in which they crossed the ocean unto this land, which they called the promised land, it having been conferred upon Joseph their forefather, by promise. They landed in South America and commenced their settlement.

[1842^](#) [John Taylor or J.S.](#)

"Facts Are Stubborn Things," Times and Seasons, Vol. 3 No. 22 September 15, 1842, pp. 921-22

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 Cachiuel 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 reproofs 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.

Note* This editorial is important for a number of reasons:

(1) Nothing is mentioned of "Chili, thirty degrees south latitude."

(2) For the first time, an idea is introduced that implies that Lehi might have landed somewhere except Chile. If the phrase "a little south of the Isthmus of Darien" is not just a case of bad geographical description on the part of the editor, then Lehi would have landed somewhere in what is now either Colombia, Ecuador, or Peru.

The statement that Lehi "landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien" (Panama) could also be implied from an article entitled "Zarahemla" which appeared in the Oct 1, 1842 issue of The Times and Seasons. In that article the idea was put forth that the city of Zarahemla was near the ruins of Quirigua in Guatemala, and that "Central America, or Guatimala is situated north of the Isthmus of Darien and once embraced several hundred miles of territory from north to south" (see the quote in Geog1.sta). Thus a landing site "a little south of the Isthmus of Darien" would be plausible in this situation.

(3) The statement is made that "the world will prove Joseph Smith a true prophet by circumstantial evidence, in experiments." If such is the case, then this makes a case for the importance and value of "experimental" Book of Mormon geographical theories with their accompanying "evidence."

Note* It has always seemed odd to me that while these "new" ideas about Lehi's landing "a little south of the Isthmus of Darien" and the location of Zarahemla being "near Quirigua" were circulated in the Fall of 1842, they apparently fell on deaf ears. By the 1850's, Orson Pratt was emerging as the main authority on Book of Mormon geography, yet he never mentioned the ideas printed in these Times & Seasons articles. He steadfastly held to the idea that Lehi landed in Chile, and that Zarahemla was in Colombia on the river Magdalena (Sidon).

Interestingly, Matt Roper has proposed that perhaps Orson Pratt was ignorant of these ideas. In the Fall of 1842 it seems he was brought nearly to insanity because of conflicting rumors about his wife Sarah. Orson Pratt had been told that Joseph Smith desired Orson's wife as his own plural wife and that John C. Bennett was accused of having committed adultery with his wife. Both men denied these

charges, however under these circumstances, Orson's mind and spirit were thrown into confusion. Almost overnight he became a rebel, refusing to sustain action by Joseph or the Twelve, or believe their explanations. Orson was excommunicated on August 20, 1842. Orson was buffeted by the ideas of anti-Mormons and apostates, but finally reached a turning point when he realized the extent of their plans of destruction against the Mormons in general and against Joseph in particular. On January 20, 1843, Joseph called for a special council of the Twelve to announce that Orson "had confessed his sins and manifested deep repentance." That afternoon both Orson and his wife Sarah were rebaptized, even though his wife Sarah had never been excommunicated. (see Breck England, "The Life and Thought of Orson Pratt," University of Utah Press, 1985, pp. 77-79). Thus, the time period from August 1842 until January, 1843 could have been a void in Orson Pratt's mind in regard to LDS matters dealing with Book of Mormon geography. (Communication from Matt-Roper, along with article, 3/06/2004).

Nevertheless, Orson Pratt and John Taylor would serve 40 years together in the Quorum of the Twelve. During this time Orson Pratt would make multiple references to the Hemispheric Theory (1848, 1849, 1850, 1866, 1868, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1876, 1877) before the death of Brigham Young in 1877. At this time John Taylor was sustained as President of the Twelve. Taylor was President when Orson Pratt made further Hemispheric remarks in 1878, and in 1879 when Orson Pratt's Hemispheric footnotes were included in a new edition of the Book of Mormon. During the same time period and up until the death of Orson Pratt in 1879 I find only two remarks by John Taylor reflecting Book of Mormon geography (see 1844, 1845) and neither of them would counter Pratt's ideas.

Note* The above legend concerning the Toltecas and their ancestral descent from those who followed Moses is interestingly supported somewhat by one of the Arab traditions concerning Jewish settlers who came into their country anciently. S. Kent Brown writes the following:

The traditions about Israelites or Jews coming to live in Arabia number essentially three. One holds that some of the Hebrew slaves who came out of Egypt with Moses turned aside from the main migrating group and settled in northern Arabia. There is a certain attraction in this notion because Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, lived in Midian, a region that lay in northwestern Arabia (see Exodus 2:15-16; 3:1). Thus one might suppose that it would be natural for some of Moses' migrants to settle there. But no archaeological or other kind of evidence exists to show that any sizable group of Israelites inhabited Midian in those days. ("Jerusalem Connections to Arabia in 600 B.C.," in *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem*, John W. Welch, David R. Seely and Jo Ann H. Seely eds., Provo: FARMS, 2004, pp. 635-636--see notation)

Yet Reuben Ahroni adds the following:

Various traditions concerning the early settlement of Jews in Arabia are current among the Yemenite Jews themselves. These traditions they claim, are very ancient transmitted orally from one generation to the other. One of these traditions traces their settlement back to the times when the tribes of Israel

wandered in the wilderness following the Exodus. According to this tradition, a number of the wandering Israelites rebelled against Moses, turned southward to Yemen, and settled there. ("Antiquity of Jewish Settlement in Southern Arabia," in *Yemenite Jewry: Origins, Culture, and Literature*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986, p. 25.)

If such a group of Jews did migrate to the southern coast of Arabia (Yemen), they would have traveled along the same general route that Lehi followed and much like Lehi, they would have put themselves in a position to migrate eastward across the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean in a manner similar to the route taken by Lehi, although not necessarily at the same time period nor in the same time frame. One of the main sea ports along the southern coast is Aden, which is located in Yemen. It was a major port for the frankincense trade and shipping to and from the southeastern coasts of Arabia (Oman), and beyond.

Note* Many people have actively debated as to whether or not Joseph Smith was actively involved in the editing process of *The Times and Seasons*, or whether it was John Taylor to whom they might attribute the above comments regarding Book of Mormon geography. For example, Jonn D. Claybaugh makes an argument in support of the idea that Joseph Smith was in control. In his article, "Did the Prophet Joseph Smith Confine the Geography of the Book of Mormon to Mesoamerica? Does It Matter?" (date?), Claybaugh notes that in the earlier March 15 1842 edition of the *Times and Seasons*, Joseph wrote the following:

This paper commences my editorial career, I alone stand responsible for it, and shall do for all papers having my signature henceforward. I am not responsible for the publication, or arrangement of the former paper; the matter did not come under my supervision. JOSEPH SMITH (*Times and Seasons*, Volume 3, Number 9 [15 March 1842], page 710)

Claybaugh then lists the following issues which carry Joseph's signature as evidence that the information contained in these papers actually was edited by Joseph:

Times and Seasons, vol. 3, Number 22 [15 September 1842], pp. 914-15

Times and Seasons, Vol. 3, Number 23 [1 October 1842], p. 927.

Times and Seasons, Vol. 4, Number 22 [1 October 1843], pp. 346-47.

Joseph Fielding Smith, in his 1938 compilation of *^Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, p. 267), included the editorial comments from the 15 September, 1842 *Times and Seasons*, thus implying that Joseph Smith was the editor. However, he did not include the editorial comments from the 1 September, 1842 *Times and Seasons*. This also reinforces the idea that Joseph Smith at least read and okayed the statement that Lehi landed "a little south of the Isthmus of Darien."

From a different perspective, Delbert Curtis (*Christ in North America*, p. 18) takes exception to the view that Joseph Smith had a hand in either of these volumes. He writes that John Taylor assumed the editorial chair of the *Times and Seasons* at the end of 1841 and conducted the publication until the final issue in February 15, 1846. August 8, 1842, Joseph Smith and Orrin Porter Rockwell were taken into custody on an extradition order issued by the Governor of Illinois for the Governor of Missouri. Joseph and Orrin were released on a writ of "habeas corpus" and went into hiding. Joseph Smith spent much of the next five months on an island in the Mississippi River, until he surrendered January 5, 1843. (*The Restored Church*, by William Edwin Berrett, *Desert Book*, 1961, pp. 218, 224-225). . . . It was during this time, while Joseph was in hiding, that the excerpts about the geography of the Book of Mormon were put in the *Times and Seasons*.

Francis M. Gibbons (*John Taylor: Mormon Philosopher, Prophet of God*) writes the following about John Taylor's situation:

. . . more important to Elder Taylor's editing and writing career, the Prophet began to ease him into key positions on the Church publications, the *Times and Seasons* and the *Wasp*. The *Times and Seasons* had been edited by Joseph's brother Don Carlos Smith until his death on August 7, 1841. Soon after, the Prophet became the editor of that publication, and Elder Taylor his assistant. However, because of Joseph's preoccupation with other weighty responsibilities, Elder Taylor was from the beginning of his connection with the *Times and Seasons* its chief editor in fact if not in name. And a year later, the formal title was conferred upon him. (pp. 48-49)

Thus we see that people on both sides of the issue have good points to make. However, as far as I am concerned, they both seem to miss the most important point. For regardless of who it was that was responsible for the content of these issues of *The Times and Seasons*, the fact that anyone felt free to print the statement that Lehi "landed a little south of the Isthmus of Darien" implies that there had been no official revelation on the matter. This in turn implies that the previous statements regarding Lehi's Travels (i. e. that Lehi landed "in Chili") apparently were not considered official revelations but opinions (even though they might have been inspired opinions).

In regards to the infallibility of early statements about Book of Mormon geography by leaders of the Church, one should keep in mind that Joseph Smith himself recorded the following for his journal entry of February 8, 1843:

Wednesday, 8.--This morning, I read German, and visited with a brother and sister from Michigan, who thought that "a prophet is always a prophet;" but I told them that a prophet was a prophet only when he was acting as such. (*History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, Vol. V, S.L.C.: *Deseret Book*, Reprint 1967, p. 265.)

In April of 1843, Joseph would go on to say, "I want the liberty of thinking and believing as I please. . . . It does not prove that a man is not a good man because he errs in doctrine." (*Ibid.*, p. 340)

[1842 Theoretical Model--SLIGHTLY MODIFIED HEMISPHERIC. John Taylor or Joseph Smith, "Facts Are Stubborn Things," Times and Seasons, Vol. 3 No. 22, September 15, 1842, pp. 921-22; see also Times and Seasons, Oct. 1, 1843. Lehi's Landing = "A little south of the Isthmus of Darien, Zarahemla was near Quirigua, Guatemala]

[1842^](#) [J. B. Turner](#) (anti-LDS)

Mormonism in All Ages: or the Rise, Progress, and Causes of Mormonism with the Biography of Its Author and Founder, Joseph Smith, Junior. By Professor J. B. Turner, Illinois College, Jacksonville, Ill. New York: Published by Platt & Peters, 1842

On page 185 we find J. B. Turner writing the following: in seeming response to Parley P. Pratt's 1837 Voice of Warning:

The first point to be made out by the Mormons from Scripture is, that the North American Indians are the descendants of Joseph, as the Book of Mormon asserts.

To this end, they refer to Jacob's blessing on the seed of Joseph, Genesis xlix. ver. 22-26. In order to interpret and apply this passage literally, they make Joseph's bough, "running over the wall," (verse 22) to mean the progenitors of the American Indians crossing the Atlantic ocean to this country. The Atlantic ocean is therefore the literal wall.

Note* The seed of Joseph was only represented by Lehi's group. Thus the Atlantic ocean as here cited as a path for the seed of Joseph would be the route crossed to the promised land. J. B. Turner was, at times in this part of his book, referencing Parley P. Pratt's 1837 Voice of Warning., yet I find no reference to an Atlantic crossing by Lehi in the Voice of Warning. Furthermore, I can't find any reference before 1842 to an Atlantic crossing by Lehi from any other source. (See the chronological Summary at the end of this volume.) Thus this statement represents some confusion on the part of J. B. Turner or some Mormon source was preaching that Lehi traveled across the Atlantic to the promised land.

[1842^](#) [Daniel P. Kidder](#) (anti-LDS)

Mormonism and the Mormons: A Historical View of the Rise and Progress of the Sect Self-Styled Latter-Day Saints, New York:

Carlton and Lanahan, 1842

Reprinted in 1852 in New York by Lane & Scott, pp. 265-267.

In a polemical attack on Mormonism, Daniel Kidder would raise questions about Lehi's travels to the promised land that wouldn't be addressed by Mormon authors for over a century. He writes:

On the supposition that the Lord was actually about to people the western continent by means of this family, the first query that arises is, why were they not directed to the Mediterranean Sea, which was so near Jerusalem, instead of being made to perform the long and perilous journey to the borders of the Red Sea? More especially since the voyage through the former would have been shorter by six or seven thousand miles, (no trifling distance), than the one performed according to the data given. An easterly course from the borders of the Red Sea would have taken them across the Desert of Arabia to the Persian Gulf.

Without discussing the practicability of these persons securing, by means of the bow and arrow, in such a region, not only their daily food, but also the stores necessary for a long voyage at sea, we will suppose them all duly embarked on board the ship, miraculously constructed by one man, while his brothers were wasting their time in idleness. . . .

What a fund of knowledge this individual possessed! He must either have known how to sail directly over such continents and islands as lay between him and his destination, or have been so acquainted with their latitude and longitude, as to know how to avoid them. In either case, he was quite in advance of his times . . .

We submit a condensed view of the whole, in the language of O. Pratt, professor of mathematics and English literature in the Nauvoo University, who, by some means, has discovered that the voyage above alluded to was made across the Pacific Ocean, terminating on the western coast of South America. . . .

Note* Daniel Kidder would raise questions about the scarcity of food and water if Lehi took "an easterly course from the borders of the Red Sea . . . across the Desert of Arabia to the Persian Gulf." Where he got the idea that Lehi traveled "across the Desert of Arabia to the Persian Gulf" is unknown at present. In this chronology, neither wordings had been specifically proposed as of this date.

[1845^](#) [Samuel Brannan](#)

Untitled, in The Prophet, beginning with Vol. I-No. XLI (March 1) and continuing in a series (March 1,8,15,22,29), 1845. Published every Saturday by S. Brannan at the Latter Day Saint Book Depository, No 7 Spruce Street; New York.

Each of the five parts begins on page 1 and is less than one page long. Part 1 contains part of an Aztec "map" preserved among the Mexican natives, depicting the journey of their forefathers to America. Brannan likens this journey to that of Lehi's colony to America. The article is accompanied by a large illustration of this "map" with a caption underneath which reads: "The Journey of Lehi and his family

from Jerusalem to the continent of America, in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah King of Judeah, previous to the Babylonish captivity." He writes:

The above engraving is a fac-simile of the commencement of a record kept by the natives of Mexico, representing the journey of their fathers to America which we feel to flatter ourselves will be found very interesting to our readers.--It is upwards of twenty feet in length, and commencing with this, we shall continue to publish it in detached portions in each number with comments until finished. And any one that is familiar with the Book of Mormon, can at once discover the harmony existing between the two records one having been kept by the more enlightened part of the aborigines, (the Nephites) which will be found in the writings of the book of mormon, as translated by Joseph Smith, the Prophet of the nineteenth century and the other kept by the less enlightened (the Lamanites) which we now propose to lay before our readers and of which the above is a commencement.

The following account of its discovery, we copy from Delafield's Antiquities of America, page 95th.

About the year A.D. 1780, the Chevalier Botturini, an Italian gentleman visited Mexico for the purpose of obtaining what information was to be had touching the ancient inhabitation [sic] of America. He was ardently engaged in the pursuit of all that contributed to develop the history of past ages, and in forming collections which would illustrate the manner and customs of races which were at this day almost forgotten. At Mexico he received a polite attention of the Government; and every facility was afforded him of becoming acquainted with the history and custom of the various nations successively conquerors and occupants of Anahuac, as Mexico was anciently termed. He was highly successful in amassing valuable information, and in collecting hieroglyphic paintings, maps, and drawings of the temple, idols, etc. but from unknown causes, before he was quite ready to return to Europe, he unhappily incurred the displeasure of the Government, and was incarcerated. The unfortunate gentleman died in prison of a broken heart.--His papers, and manuscript collections were taken from him and became scattered.

Subsequently, Mr. Bullock, of London--then whom none has ever proved more enthusiastic and energetic in pursuit of specimens of antiquity, and of ancient and modern art--visited Mexico with nearly, if not the same views as those of M. Butturini. [sic] Though indefatigable exertion and industry, Mr. Bullock succeeded in making casts of planispheres, zodiacs and idols, which he took home to London and exhibited in a room fitted up for the purpose in his Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly. Among other curiosities he obtained a very long "Aztec Map," delineating the travels of this race through America, a fac-simile of which is prefixed to this work.

This map, if it may properly be so called, was among the valuable collections of M. Butturini [sic] and was confiscated with the rest of his property by the Mexican government. On Mr. Bullock's visiting Mexico, with a view to obtain knowledge and specimens of art, which should throw light on the history of the ancient races which occupied that country, he fortunately procured this map, and took it with him to England. . . .

When Mr. Bullock again left London, and established his residence in Cincinnati, Ohio, he brought two copies of this drawing, both of which are at present in this city, and from these the annexed engraving is

taken--The writer of this volume has received from Mr. Bullock himself, the history of his acquisition of his valuable documents, and is further informed by him, that a copy yet exists in the Cathedral of Mexico. Of its genuineness and authenticity there is no question. The figures and hieroglyphic characters correspond with those in other paintings made by this ancient family. Its genuineness was admitted by Botturini, who obtained it from the native Indians, and it has ever since received its full credit for being what it professes . . . With full and unhesitating faith, then, the writer begs to submit it to the study of the reader, as a subject deserving much attention, and about which comparatively little is yet known.

The native Mexicans stated it to be a chart delineating the entrance into America of the Aztec race and a narrative of their slow and polemic journey southwardly into Anahuac.

We shall make no comments at present of any great length touching this journey, until our readers have become more acquainted with it, after they have received some seven or eight numbers, when they will be better able to judge of its merits.

[1845 Illustration: "Aztec Map" "The Journey of Lehi and his family from Jerusalem to the continent of America, in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah King of Judeah, precious to the Babylonish captivity." Samuel Brannan, Untitled in The Prophet, Vol. I-No. XLI New York: S. Brannan at the Latter Day Saint Book Depository, March 1, 1845.]

Note* In Part 2 we find a facsimile of the "map" depicting four persons traveling toward a tree with a rod leading toward it. It is compared with the tree of life story of the Book of Mormon. Parts 3 and 4 relate the Zion's Camp march and a report of finding a burial mound with stone altars, which resulted in the discovery of Zelph, who had fallen in the final battle among the Lamanites. Part 5 is not applicable.

Note* It is interesting that in 1848, John E. Page would use this same codice as an illustration of the Jaredite journey to the New World (see the 1848 notation)

[1845 Joseph? or Frederick G. Williams?](#) ("Lehi's Travels" statement)
J. M. Bernhisel manuscript of Joseph Smith's "new translation" of the Bible

Note* Before I make a connection with John Bernhisel and the Lehi's Travels statement, I would first like to lay a little bit of historical groundwork. John M. Bernhisel was born in Pennsylvania on June 23, 1799. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1827 and thereafter successfully practiced medicine, first in Philadelphia, and then in New York City. In 1837 he joined the LDS Church and on April 15, 1841, was appointed bishop over the Church in New York City. A cordial friendship developed

between him and Joseph Smith. In 1843, Bernhisel moved to Nauvoo and boarded for a time at the Mansion House. Truman Madsen gives the following insights:

The Prophet's home life with Emma included prayers three times a day, morning, noon, and night. It included her leading the family in singing. The "family" was always larger than Joseph's blood relatives--visitors from different places, immigrants needing temporary accommodation, and so on. Some came for a week or so, and some, like John Bernhisel, for three years.

Thus John Bernhisel would strike up a trusted friendship with both Joseph and Emma that continued through the martyrdom and afterward. It would be this friendship that would one day allow him access to Joseph's manuscripts of his "new translation" of the Bible.

According to Robert Matthews, "the Prophet Joseph Smith claimed a divine appointment to make an inspired rendition or, as he termed it, a 'new translation' of the Bible. This appointment can be illustrated by excerpts from his writings." Robert Millet notes:

On 8 October 1829 Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery purchased a large pulpit-style edition of the King James Bible (containing the Old and New Testaments and Apocrypha) from E. B. Grandin in Palmyra, New York, for \$3.75. The Bible was printed in 1828 by the H. and E. Phinney Company at Cooperstown, New York. It was this Bible which was used in the translation. . . . Joseph the Prophet was assisted in his translation of the Bible by a number of persons who served as scribes.

Robert Matthews adds the following details concerning the scribes:

The manuscript shows that Oliver Cowdery was the first, serving between June and October 1830; he recorded an introductory revelation (Moses 1) and the translation of KJV Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 4:18. John Whitmer served second, from October until December 1830, recording the translation of KJV Genesis 4:19 to approximately Genesis 5:20. Sidney Rigdon was next, becoming the main scribe from early December 1830 until the translation was finished on July 2, 1833. He recorded most of the translation from KJV Genesis 5:21 to the end of the Bible, although others recorded small portions.

According to Robert Millet:

The Prophet's interest or involvement did not cease when he had made his way through the King James Bible in July of 1833. Joseph spent his remaining years (until the time of his death in 1844) reviewing and revising the manuscripts--seeking to find appropriate words to convey what he had come to know by revelation. Robert Matthews has written concerning revisions in the original manuscripts. . . . Some of the revisions were written directly on the original manuscripts, while others were separate sheets of paper pinned to the original manuscripts.

According to Robert Matthews:

After Joseph Smith's death in June 1844, the marked Phinney Bible and the 477-page manuscript were kept by his widow, Emma Smith. . . . Bernhisel later reported that he made a complete copy of the markings in the Bible and an extensive but incomplete copy of the manuscript entries (Matthews, 1975, p. 118).

To this Robert Millet adds the following:

Not long after the death of Joseph Smith, however, Dr. John M. Bernhisel, a trusted friend of the Prophet and Emma, was given an opportunity to examine the original manuscripts. In describing the occasion (in the spring of 1845) when he was able to obtain the manuscripts, L. John Nuttall [Secretary to the First Presidency] has recorded:

Elder John M. Bernhisel called at the request of Pres. Taylor and explained concerning his manuscript copy of the New Translation of the Bible as taken from the Manuscript of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Bro. Bernhisel stated: "I had great desires to see the New Translation, but did not like to ask for it; but one evening, being at Bro. Joseph's house about a year after his death, sister Emma to my surprise asked me if I would not like to see it. I answered, yes. She handed it to me the next day, and I kept it in my custody about three months. She told me it was not prepared for the press, as Joseph had designed to go through it again. I did not copy all that was translated leaving some few additions and changes that were made in some of the books. But so far as I did copy, I did so as correctly as I could do. The markings in my Bible correspond precisely with the markings in the Prophet Joseph's Bible, so that all the books corrected in his Bible so far as I now know are marked in my Bible: but as I stated, the additions are not all made in my Manuscript of those books that I did not copy."

According to H. Donl Peterson, this partial copy which Dr. John M. Bernhisel made amounted to less than half of the original manuscripts. Robert Matthews writes that "The Bernhisel manuscript is in the Historian's Library of the LDS Church in Salt Lake City, but the location of the Bernhisel marked Bible is not known." Robert Millet notes:

The limitations of what has come to be known as the Bernhisel Manuscript are clear from John Bernhisel's own words; the copy made by him is incomplete, and thus inadequate in representing exactly what the Prophet Joseph Smith and his scribes recorded. . . .

It is no doubt the case that had Bernhisel known in the spring of 1845 that the original manuscripts would be unavailable to the LDS Church for such a long period (about 125 years), he would have taken greater care to record everything that Joseph had recorded. His was intended as a personal copy, and was never envisioned by him as becoming an official document. John Bernhisel arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on 24 September 1848, and it is assumed that he brought his manuscript with him. A copy of this manuscript was made by direction of the First Presidency in 1879 [see note at the end of this

discussion]. The original Bernhisel Manuscript is significant as a historical relic, and its early date of 1845 does much toward verifying the present accuracy of the original JST manuscripts.

John M. Bernhisel died on September 18, 1881.

Regarding the fate of the original "new translation" manuscript, Robert Millet has this to say:

At the April 1866 conference of the RLDS Church, plans were made to publish the Prophet Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible. A committee approached Emma Smith Bidamon on 3 May 1866 regarding the use of the original manuscripts, and Emma turned the manuscripts over to them. She wrote later to her son, Joseph III: "Now as it regards the Ms of the New Translation if your wish [is] to keep them you may do so, but if not I would like to have them. I have often thought the reason our house did not burn down when it was so often on fire was because of them, and I still feel there is a sacredness attached to them."

An RLDS publication committee had the manuscript ready for publication by 1 July 1867, and the first shipment of the printed edition (five hundred copies of the JST arrived in Plano, Illinois, on 7 December 1867. The book was called *The Holy Scriptures*.

Having established this historical background, let me proceed. It seems that on present-day examination of this Bernhisel book, we find that it contains a handwritten note with the same information as found in the Frederick G. Williams Lehi's Travels statement (see the 1936 notation). Robert Matthews elaborates:

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 Lattitude 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 lattitude.

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 "lattitude."

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. . . .

Frederick G. Williams III adds: "The Lehi statement is found on the last sheet of the copy and is preceded by several blank pages. The statement which follows [the Lehi's Travels statement] is the only item on the page.

While questions regarding the Frederick G. Williams document [Lehi's Travels statement] would have begun in 1865, and questions regarding the Bernhisel manuscript would have begun in 1879, our present-day evaluations seem to have the most perspective. Thus while there have been a number of explanations as to the source of the Lehi's Travels statement in the Bernhisel manuscript, they begin with Robert Matthews.

Of Matthews's qualifications, Robert Millet writes:

In 1953, after learning that the "New Translation" manuscripts were in the hands of the RLDS Church, Brother Robert Matthews began to inquire of the leaders of that church as to the possibility of examining the original documents. He would continue his requests for fifteen years. . . . In 1960 Robert Matthews did a master's thesis at BYU on the four Gospels in the JST, but in that study he did not have access to the original manuscripts. Largely through the efforts of Reed C. Durham and the graciousness of President Joseph Fielding Smith, the Bernhisel Manuscript became available for research in 1965. In 1968 he completed a Ph.D. at BYU, his doctoral dissertation examining the printed sources of the JST and the Bernhisel Manuscript. This study opened the way for the RLDS Church to permit him to have access to the original manuscripts, beginning in 1968. In 1975 he published his book, "A Plainer Translation," and therein discussed the historical and doctrinal significance of the JST, in this work drawing not only upon printed JST sources but also upon the original manuscripts.

In 1972 Matthews would write:

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.

In 1978 Paul R. Cheesman would write the following:

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.

In a 1988 FARMS paper, Frederick Williams III would write:

When speaking of the Lehi's Travels statement, another early version of the statement, written in the handwriting of Dr. John M. Bernhisel, must also be considered. In the spring of 1845, Dr. Bernhisel made a partial copy of Joseph Smith's Inspired translation of the Bible. The Lehi statement is found on the last sheet of the copy and is preceded by several blank pages. The statement which follows [the Lehi's Travels statement] is the only item on the page. The statement has no heading or comment, and it is not attributed to Joseph Smith or to anyone else.

Although we do not know how Dr. Bernhisel obtained the above information, it has the same wording and nearly the same spelling, capitalization, and punctuation as the Williams copy, with both men misspelling the word "lattice." This correlation suggests that Bernhisel copied the Frederick G. Williams document or that the two had an unknown third common source.

Thus all these men seem to follow the thought that Bernhisel copied the Frederick Williams document (which implies Williams as the source), or that the two had an unknown third common source (possibly Joseph Smith). I would like to propose a third alternative, but first I need to present a brief chronology which I will list below:

- 1836 Frederick G. Williams makes his Lehi's Travels note (kept in his personal possession).
- 1845 John Bernhisel copies the New Translation manuscript which Emma Smith had loaned him.
- 1848 John Bernhisel comes west to Utah.

1864-5 Ezra Williams lends the Frederick G. Williams manuscripts (including the Lehi's Travels statement) to the LDS Church.

1865 Joseph F. Smith makes a note concerning the Lehi's Travel statement

1866-7 Emma lends the New Translation manuscript to the RLDS Church which publishes it in its entirety for the first time.

1879 Bernhisel lends his book (with his last-page Lehi's Travels statement) to the LDS Church to copy for the first time.

1881 John Bernhisel dies on September 28.

Having made this chronology I will first propose that what prompted the LDS Church to seek the Bernhisel's manuscript in 1879 was the fact that the RLDS Church had in its possession the original manuscript of the "New Translation," and had just two years before (1867) published the full manuscript. The LDS Church would have been negligent if it did not have at least some form of verification of that manuscript in its possession and so petitioned John Bernhisel for access to his manuscript.

The acquisition of the Bernhisel manuscript (and its Lehi's Travels note) in 1879 was 14 years after the Church acquired the Frederick G. Williams manuscripts (and its Lehi's Travels document) in 1864-5. Now it should be said here that John Bernhisel, being a major Utah legislative representative, was intimately acquainted with the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve. If Joseph F. Smith acquired a knowledge of the Lehi's Travels statement in 1865, he had 14 years to convey that information to John Bernhisel, either directly or indirectly through other members of the Quorum of the Twelve or members of the First Presidency. And if it was not until after 1865 that references or implications to the "latitude" of Lehi's landing location began to appear in authoritative LDS speeches and articles [see the Chronological Summary Chart], then John Bernhisel could have also gained access to the Lehi's Travels information during this time period, and could have copied the Lehi's Travels statement on the last page of his manuscript papers. Thus the handwriting style would have been his, and by the time Robert Matthews would examine the Bernhisel manuscript papers in 1965 (about a century later), a similar ink would have appeared as old as the other entries. It could have easily been mistaken as a note made at the same time in 1845.

If this theory is correct, then what remains is only one primary document--a circa 1836 Frederick G. Williams document containing the Lehi's Travels statement. While his posterity considered this information to be a revelation to him personally, there seems to be no dispute that the note was his personal note, and history seems to bear out the fact that at least the ideas concerning latitude were probably his personal ideas.

One might rightly ask, Is there anything that might go against this theory? Sure. There are statements that imply that John Bernhisel had been privy to a number of early revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Under the date of Dec. 29, 1843 we find the following: "Joseph relates his early revelations to Dr. Bernhisel and John H. Jackson (a man who recently became a close friend, but will soon turn against Joseph). . . . (HC 6:149-52) If Joseph Smith had related to John Bernhisel on this occasion a "revelation" regarding Lehi's Travels and later Bernhisel recalled this incident when he came across some note in Joseph's manuscripts in 1845, it could have prompted him to record such information. Furthermore, Frederick G. Williams was scribe to Joseph Smith between the years 1832 and 1837. During this same time period Joseph was constantly revising his "new translation" manuscript. Frederick G. Williams' Lehi's Travels information could have easily become part of this process, a note could have been made and become part of the notes attached to the manuscript. But once again, no known note has ever been discovered among Joseph's manuscripts.

It is also apparent that an examination of the ink would need to be made. In telephone conversations with Robert J. Matthews (8/22/2004) and the LDS Church Archives (8/23/2004) I learned a few things relative to the Bernhisel Manuscript. At present the Church only has available a photoprint copy, which is available for viewing but not for copying. The whereabouts of the original manuscript is unknown to the department but presumably known to the First Presidency. Chances of viewing the manuscript at this point in time were considered slim. It is not known when the photoprint copy was made. This process was not used in 1879 when supposedly John Nuttal inquired of John Bernhisel if the Church could make a copy. There is also no known written copy of the Bernhisel manuscript as implied in John Nuttal's note of 1879, which raises the question as to whether the Church (and what Robert Matthews saw) was Bernhisel's manuscript or a written copy.

When Robert Matthews was permitted to see the Bernhisel manuscript, it was a bunch of loose papers in a folder. He was primarily concerned with the "New Translation" and only incidentally noted the Lehi's Travels statement written on the last page. He is of the opinion that only a handwriting expert could confirm that the statement (as well as the manuscript?) was written personally by Bernhisel, and that it would be very difficult, even with ink analysis, to determine the time of writing.

(See the notations for 1830, 1836, 1882, 1978.)

Note* President John Taylor initially requested John Bernhisel's manuscript for copying in 1879. Thus he would probably have been advised concerning the Lehi's Travels note. This note, along with the Frederick G. Williams note would have created a question in his mind, especially since John Taylor had been an assistant editor to Joseph Smith when in the Sept. 15, 1842 edition of the Times & Seasons, an

editorial announced that Lehi landed "a little south of the Isthmus of Darien." While Brigham Young died on August 29, 1877, John Taylor would not be sustained as president of the Church until the October conference of 1880. His counselors were George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith. President Taylor would not die until 1887, which left him a number of years to say something on the matter of where Lehi was supposed to have landed. Whether John Taylor personally questioned or had any input into the 1882 Compendium Lehi's Travels statement is not known.

[1848^](#) [John E. Page](#) (Strangite)

"Collateral Testimony of the Truth and Divinity of the Book of Mormon.- No. 1," in the Gospel Herald, vol. 3 No. 24, Voree, Wisconsin (August 31, 1848), p. 108.

According to the Book of Mormon there was a prophet who dwelt in the city of Jerusalem contemporary with Jeremiah the prophet, by the name of Lehi. . . . They traveled to the Red Sea, and then "on the borders thereof," an eastwardly direction, until they were commanded to stop and "build a ship to cross the great waters," (the ocean.) They landed on the Pacific side of the southern part of Central America. Read Book of Mormon, 7th, 8th and 9th pages, stereotyped edition. As collateral testimony to the truth of the above, I present the following, copied from the "Incidents of travels in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan, by John L. Stephens, Vol. 2, 1841, page 172:--

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 reproofs 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. From Tanub sprang the families of the kings of Tula and Quiche, and the first monarch of the Toltecas.-- Nimaquiche, the fifth king of that line, and more beloved than any of his predecessors, was directed by an oracle to leave Tula, with his people, who had by this time multiplied greatly and conduct them from the kingdom of Mexico to that of Guatemala. In performing this journey they consumed many years, suffered extraordinary hardships, and wandered over an immense tract of country, until they discovered the Lake of Atitlan, and resolved to settle near it in a country which they called Quiche. Nimaquiche was accompanied by his three brothers.

The reader will doubtless make all necessary allowances for whatever deviations or corruptions of facts which might have taken place in the traditions that have been handed down through savage hands of the American Indians for so long a period of time.--John E. Page

Source: Information on the above article were first given to me by Matt Roper, 1/30/2004. I have subsequently verified the source and obtained copies of the source material through the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Strangite Church) in Voree, Wisconsin. (www.mormonbookstore.com/Stangite.htm)

Note* This is the first time that anyone placed Lehi's landing location north of the Isthmus of Darien (Panama). This gives further evidence that the question of Lehi's landing site was still up for debate.

Note* The following is some biographical information on John E. Page:

John E. Page was born Feb. 25, 1799 in Trenton Township, Oneida county, New York. He was baptized by Emer Harris (brother to Martin Harris) Aug. 18, 1833, in Ohio; ordained an Elder . . . in Sept., 1833, and moved to Kirtland in the fall of 1835. In May, 1836, he was called to go on a mission to Canada, to which he objected for the reason that he was destitute of clothing. The Prophet Joseph took off his coat and gave it to him, telling him to go, and the Lord would bless him. He started May 31, 1836, for Leeds county, Canada West, and returned after seven months and twenty days' absence. Feb 16, 1837, he again left Kirtland, taking with him his family consisting of wife and two children, and continued his mission in Canada. During his two years' labor there he baptized upwards of six hundred persons, and traveled more than five thousand miles, principally on foot. In May, 1838, he started for Missouri with a company of Saints, occupying thirty wagons, and arrived at De Witt, Carroll county, Mo., in the beginning of October, while that place was being attacked by a ruthless mob, which a few days later succeeded in driving all the Saints away. The exiles, including Bro. Page and his company, sought protection in Far West, Caldwell county, where they shared in all the grievous persecutions which the Saints there had to endure. Elder Page buried his wife and two children, who died as martyrs for their religion, through extreme suffering, for the want of the common comforts of life.

Having been called by revelation to the Apostleship, Elder Page was ordained one of the Twelve Apostles Dec. 19, 1838, at Far West. . . . In 1843 Elder Page, in company with his brethren of the Twelve, went to Philadelphia, New Jersey, New York and Boston; in the latter city he remained for some time. Pres. Joseph Smith, disapproving of his course in Boston, directed him to proceed to Washington and build up the branch there. He went to Washington, remained a short time, and baptized several, then returned to Pittsburgh.

Soon after Pres. Smith's death, an advertisement appeared in the Beaver (Penn.) "Argus" that Elder John E. Page was out of employment and would preach for anybody that would sustain his family. In a council of the Twelve held at Nauvoo Feb. 9, 1846, Elder Page was disfellowshipped from that quorum, after which he became very bitter against his former associates and advised the Saints to accept the apostate James J. Strang as their leader. He soon afterwards left Nauvoo, and after traveling about one hundred and twenty miles he met a company of Saints coming from Canada. He told them that he was one of the Twelve sent by council to inform them that they must turn about and go to Voree, Wisconsin, Mr. Strang's place of gathering. He deceived some, but most of the Saints would not believe him and

sent a messenger to Nauvoo to find out the truth of the matter. Elder Page was excommunicated from the Church, June 26, 1846. . . .

Source: Andrew Jenson, Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Later-day Saints, 4 vols. Salt Lake City, p. 92 (GospelLink).

Note* See other quotations by John E. Page for perspective (geog1.sta, geog1.ext). See also the biographical information from RLDS and Strangite sources.

[1851^](#) [Parley P. Pratt](#)

"Address to the Red Man and Ancient Records of the Western Hemisphere," in Proclamation! To the People of the Coasts and Islands of the Pacific; of Every Nation, Kindred and Tongue. By An Apostle of Jesus Christ. Published for the Author by C. W. Wandell, Minister of the Gospel. November 1851.

Jerry Burnett and Charles Pope write:

Proclamation! To the People of the Coasts and Islands of the Pacific represents that great Mormon missionary effort begun in 1851 that expanded the Church beyond the United States and England into Europe, South Africa, India, Australia, South America, and the Pacific Islands. It was written in San Francisco in the summer of 1851 after Parley Pratt had been called to supervise the missionary effort in South America and the Pacific. Two missionaries, John Murdock and Charles W. Wandell, took the manuscript to Sydney, Australia, where it was published in November 1851.

Parley Pratt returned to Salt Lake City from San Francisco in the fall of 1852.

Parley P. Pratt writes the following:

A New Dispensation: An Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the people of the coasts and islands of the Pacific, of every nation, kindred, and tongue--Greeting:--

It has pleased the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah . . . to send forth his angels in this present age of the world, to reveal a New Dispensation. . . .(p. 1)

Address to Pagans: To those who are not Christian, but who worship the various Gods of India, China, Japan, or the Islands of the Pacific or Indian Oceans, we say--turn away from them . . . (p. 6)

Address to the Red Man: To the Red Men of America I will next address a few lines. You are a branch of the house of Israel. You are descended from the Jews, or, rather, more generally, from the tribe of Joseph, which Joseph was a great prophet and ruler in Egypt.

Your fathers left Jerusalem in the days of Jeremiah the prophet--being led by a prophet whose name was Lehi.

After leaving Jerusalem, they wandered in the wilderness of Arabia, and along the shores of the Red Sea, for eight years, living on fruits and wild game.

Arriving at the sea coast they built a ship, put on board the necessary provisions and the seed brought with them from Jerusalem; and setting sail they crossed the great ocean, and landed on the western coast of America, within the bounds of what is now called "Chili." . . . (pp. 10-11)

Source: Pre-Assassination Writings of Parley P. Pratt, edited by Jerry Burnett and Charles Pope, 8-15. Salt Lake City: Mormon Heritage, 1976.

[1855^](#) [Parley P. Pratt](#)

Key to the Science of Theology, Liverpool, 1855, pp. 22-23. Reprinted SLC: Deseret Book, 1965, p. 33.

By this science the Prophets Lehi and Nephi came out with a colony from Jerusalem, in the days of Jeremiah the prophet, and after wandering for eight years in the wilderness of Arabia, came to the seacoast, built a vessel, obtained from the Lord a compass to guide them on the way, and finally landed in safety on the coast of what is now called Chile, in South America.

[1857](#) [Franklin D. Richards](#)

A Compendium of the Faith and Doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Liverpool: Published by Orson Pratt, London, L.D.S. Book Depot, 1857.

In the Appendix on page 230 we find the following:

Chronology of the Most Important Events Recorded in the Book of Mormon

600 B.C.

Lehi, Sariah, and their four sons, Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi, left Jerusalem by the commandment of God, and journeyed into the wilderness of Arabia--pp. 17, 44, 97; pars. 3, 47, 4.

592.

Lehi and his family arrived at the land Bountiful, so called because of its much fruit. Its modern name is Arabia Felix; or Arabia the happy--p. 36, par.17.

Note* Although absent from the above, in 1882 Franklin D. Richards would publish a revised Compendium with the Lehi's Travels statement added to the commentary (see the 1882 notation).

1864-5

Ezra Williams lends the Frederick G. Williams manuscripts (including the Lehi's Travels statement) to the LDS Church.

See the discussion in the 1836 notation.

1865^ Joseph F. Smith

"Note on the Course of Lehi," Personal Letterbooks, p. 181. LDS Church Archives - Ms f 271, Film Reel #3, Book #2.

On May 8th, 1865, Joseph F. Smith recorded the following:

"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 19th deg. 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, 30 degrees south latitude."

The foregoing was copied from F. G. Williams own handwriting May 8th 1865.

Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, by JOS. F. SMITH.

Source: ^Typed copy received from Dennis C. Davis, from transcribed notes in his possession.

Note* In his Life of Joseph F. Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1969, p. 233) Joseph Fielding Smith writes the following:

After his return from this second mission to the Hawaiian Islands [in 1864], Joseph F. Smith was employed in the Historian's Office, under the direction of his kinsman, Elder George A. Smith of the Council of the Twelve. Here he assisted in the keeping of the records of the Church and came in close contact with Elder George A. Smith. "Uncle George," as he was familiarly known, was a father to Joseph F. Smith [whose actual father Hyrum Smith had been killed] and watched over him as only a father could, teaching him and directing him in the gathering and compiling of history, for there was no one associated with the Prophet Joseph Smith who had a better fund of information and a better memory than did George A. Smith who, from 1854 to 1870, acted as the historian of the Church. Moreover, while thus engaged, Joseph F. Smith was privileged to associate with the leading brethren of the Church, acting as secretary at times for the First Presidency and the Apostles. . . . on Tuesday, the 8th [of October, 1867] he was sustained as a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles . . .

Note* It is interesting that Joseph F. Smith had personal knowledge of the Lehi's Travels statement, yet in 1918 he apparently declined to name the location where Lehi landed saying that the Lord had not yet revealed it. (see 1918 notation). Furthermore, he would say nothing about this 1865 note or the 1882 Compendium statement where the Lehi's Travels statement is attributed to a "Revelation to Joseph the Seer." (see the 1882 notation).

(See the notations for 1830, 1836, 1837, 1842, 1845, 1865, 1866, 1882, 1978, 1988)

[1866^ Orson Pratt](#)

"Sacred Metallic Plates," in *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 28 December 1, 1866, p. 761.

Orson Pratt writes"

The Nephites were principally the descendants of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. The Prophet Nephi and his small company were brought out of Jerusalem, eleven years before the Babylonish captivity, or six centuries before Christ; they sailed from the southern portions of Arabia over the Indian and Pacific oceans, landing on the Western coast of South America, not far from where now stands the city of Valparaiso, in Chili.

Note* This is the first mention of the city of Valparaiso, Chile being associated with the Nephite landing site. While the maps illustrated below were from a work published in 1924, they supposedly represent "Latin America at the end of the 18th century (1796)" and "Latin America after the Wars for

Independence (1826)," and thus could be reflective of thought up to the year 1866. It is interesting to note that on these maps that the only port of any consequence listed for the whole southern part of South America was Valparaiso, Chile. While Valparaiso might be the closest port to 30o south latitude (it is actually 33o south latitude), Orson Pratt does not tie the mention of Valparaiso to any revelation or authoritative statement by any other individual. Even if he had the most probable principle sources (Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, or Frederick G. Williams) had all died by this time and thus confirmation of the source would have been difficult. Thus the association of Valparaiso with the Nephite landing place might be better accounted for through individual geographical scholarly study on the part of Elder Pratt. Interestingly the "Valparaiso" landing site phrase would not be included in Orson Pratt's footnotes to the 1879 edition of the Book of Mormon--see the 1879 notation.

[1866 Map: Latin America at the End of the 18th Century (1796). Source: Hutton Webster, History of Latin America, Boston, D.C. Heath and Company, 1924, p. 99]

[1866 Map: Latin America after the Wars for Independence (1826). Source: Hutton Webster, History of Latin America, Boston, D.C. Heath and Company, 1924, p. 129]

[1866^ Orson Pratt](#)

"Sacred Metallic Plates," in The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star No. 51, Vol. 28, December 22, 1866, p. 801.

Orson Pratt writes:

By divine commandment they [Lehi's party] left Jerusalem. By visions, and revelations, and prophecies, and miraculous manifestations, they were guided throughout their journeyings, both by land and water. And after arriving on the coast of Chili, they were still governed by revelations, as direct as those given to the former Prophets of Israel. Their revelations were recorded, both upon metallic Plates and other materials. . . .

[1868^ George A. Smith](#)

"Ancient American History," in The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star, Vol. XXX.3, No. 2, January 11, 1868, pp. 22-23.

[We commend the following synopsis of ancient American History no less to the perusal of our general readers, than to all historians, antiquarians, and ethnologists, who have from time to time manifested an interest in the history of the American Aborigines, but who, in their varied speculations, have surrounded the subject with doubts which have hitherto remained undispelled from the popular mind.

Elder Smith's diligent research has rendered him familiar, not only with modern history, but with ancient American Records, and is an authority upon this subject. It is the most comprehensive compend of ancient history of the American continent we have ever seen--Ed(itors).]

SEVENTIES' HALL LECTURES.--Yesterday evening (Dec. 4th), Elder George A. Smith delivered a most interesting lecture in the Seventies' Hall, on the Ancient History of this Continent.

After some preliminary remarks, he entered upon the history of the Jaredites . . . They landed on the west coast of Mexico, and they called North America the land of Moron. . . .

The next race of people who appear in the history of this continent reached it by two ways. Lehi and those with him left Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, took a south-easterly direction, until they reached the Persian Gulf, built a ship, and crossed the ocean, landing on the west coast of Chili, near the place where Valparaiso now stands. . . .--Deseret Evening News

Note* While the Persian Gulf might be equated with the Arabian Gulf, there is a difference between the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. The Persian Gulf extends northward from the Strait of Hormuz, which is located at about 26 degrees north latitude.

Note* In his Life of Joseph F. Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1969, p. 238) Joseph Fielding Smith writes the following:

George A. Smith was a cousin to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Hyrum Smith the patriarch, being the son of "Uncle" John Smith, brother of Joseph Smith, Sen. George A. Smith was born at Potsdam, St. Lawrence County, New York, June 26, 1817. He was one of the early converts to the Church and the youngest man ever sustained as an Apostle in this dispensation, being 22 years of age [April 26, 1839]. He was called to be first counselor to President Brigham Young, Oct. 6, 1868. He was well known for his remarkable memory and his thorough understanding of Gospel principles and the history of the Church. . . . He died Sept. 1, 1875, in Salt Lake City.

[1868^](#) [Orson Pratt](#)

Journal of Discourses (Liverpool) 1869, vol. 12, pp. 340-342

In a discourse delivered in the "Old Tabernacle" in Salt Lake City on December 27, 1868, Orson Pratt said the following:

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. . . .

Shortly after the Nephite colony was brought by the power of God, and landed on the western coast of South America, in the country we call Chili, there was a great division among them. . . .

[1870^](#) [Orson Pratt](#)

"Discourse delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, April 10, 1870. Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886, vol.13, p. 130.

Pratt writes:

From [the Book of Mormon] we learn that two great and powerful nations formerly dwelt on this continent. One nation, or rather the colony which founded it, came from the Tower of Babel soon after the days of the Flood. They colonized what we call North America, landing on the western coast, a little south of the Gulf of California, in the south-western part of this north wing of our continent. They flourished some sixteen hundred years. When they first colonized this continent from the Tower of Babel, the Lord told them if they would not serve Him faithfully, but became ripe in iniquity, they should be cut off from the face of the land. That was fulfilled about six hundred years before Christ, when they were entirely swept off, and in their stead the Lord brought a remnant of Israel, a few families, not the ten tribes, but a small portion of the tribe of Joseph. He brought them from Jerusalem first down to the Red Sea. They travelled along the eastern borders of the Red Sea for many days, and then bore off in an eastern direction which brought them to the Arabian Gulf. There they were commanded of the Lord to build a vessel. They went aboard of this vessel and were brought by the special providence of God across the great Indian and Pacific Oceans, and landed on the western coast of South America. This was about five hundred and eighty years before the coming of Christ.

[1871^](#) [Orson Pratt](#)

"The Blessings of Joseph--The American Indian," in Journal of Discourses 14:7-12, Feb. 19, 1871.

Let me here observe that the Book of Mormon, which has been published for forty-one years, gives an account of the first settlement of this country by these inhabitants, showing that they are not the ten tribes, but they are the descendants of one tribe, and they came to this country about six hundred years before Christ. The people when they first landed consisted of only two or three families; and instead of landing on the north-west coast of North America, they landed on the south-west coast of South America.

A history of the escape of these few families from Jerusalem is contained in the Book of Mormon. How they traveled on the eastern borders of the Red Sea, and how they built a vessel or ship to cross the Indian and Pacific oceans; they were instructed how to build this vessel, and when they had embarked on it, they were brought by the special direction of the Lord to this land. He guided their vessel, or instructed them how to guide it, until they landed on the west coast of South America. . . .

[1872^](#) [Orson Pratt](#)

Journal of Discourses 14 (11 Feb. 1872), pp. 324-331, 333

They (Lehi's party) 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. . . .[see note below]

Note* Valparaiso is at a latitude of thirty-three degrees south. This is somewhat different than the Lehi's Travels statement which places Lehi's landing at "thirty degrees south latitude." (For more facts and illustrative maps of the location of Valparaiso, see the 1887 notation for George Q. Cannon)

[1872^](#) [H. A. Stebbins](#) (RLDS)

"Antiquarian Researches," No. 1-13 in The True Latter Day Saints' Herald, Plano, Ill., vol. 19, No. 16, August 15, 1872---> June 15, 1873.

After quoting extensively from evidences about the ancient cultures of the Americas from a book by J. D. Baldwin called Ancient America, H. A. Stebbins says the following:

. . . It is also plain that the Nephites and Lamanites first settled in South America, and did not for some centuries extend into the North America, inhabiting first the land of Nephi. . . . (no. 11, pp. 349-350)

[1873^](#) [William H. Kelley](#) (RLDS)

"The Mormon Church," in *The True Latter Day Saints' Herald*, vol. 20 no. 2, Plano, Illinois, January 15, 1873.

(The following article was written by Bro. Kelley [William H. Kelley, Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS), Coldwater, Michigan, July 11, 1872], in answer to some misrepresenting statements, published in the Detroit (Mich.) Tribune, of the date referred to; and as he has presented the matter in an excellent light, and frank, manly manner, we insert it, commending it to the readers of the Herald as a fair answer to the oft repeated "Spaulding Story."--Ed.)

Editor Detroit Tribune: In your weekly issue of February 1, 1872, there appeared an article headed, "the Mormon Church," written by J. F. D., of East Saginaw, which contains many misrepresentations, concerning the rise of what is known as "Mormonism;" which, through your courtesy and the columns of your paper, I hope to correct; . . .

The Book of Mormon does not claim to give a history of the twelve tribes of Israel, as you affirm it does in your article; hence it is no crime to say you have willfully perverted it; but it is a history of a branch of the tribe of Joseph, and a people who came to the land of America soon after the destruction of the tower of Babel. Neither does it claim that they emigrated from the "western coast of Scotland to the northwestern coast of America." But that they left Jerusalem in a south easterly direction, and afterwards went east, to the shore of India, from which they embarked and ultimately landed upon the coast of Central or South America.

Source: <http://www.lavazone2.com/dbroadhu/IL/sain1872.htm>

Note* This is the first time that India has been proposed as Lehi's embarkation point. Interestingly, in 1974 RLDS author F. E. Butterworth would propose an India route for the Jaredites. This is the second mention of Central America being a possible landing spot for Lehi. Both times this idea has come from members of LDS sects that did not follow Brigham Young.

[1873^](#) [Orson Pratt](#)

Journal of Discourses 16 (May 18, 1873), pp. 45-58

In a discourse delivered in the Tabernacle, Ogden, Sunday morning May 18, 1873, Orson Pratt said the following as reported by James Taylor:

On page 161, Book of Mormon, it appears that the people of Limhi were a certain colony that had left the main body of the Nephites, and had settled in the land where Nephi built and located his little colony, soon after their landing on the western coast of South America.

[1874^](#) [Orson Pratt](#)

Discourse delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, September 20, 1874. Journal of Discourses , 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], vol. 17, p. 288.

And then he [Moroni] commenced telling him [Joseph] that this great American continent was once occupied by a numerous people, the descendants of the house of Israel, most of them the descendants of a remnant of the tribe of Joseph; that they came here from Jerusalem by the direct guidance of the Almighty, some six centuries before Christ; that in a vessel, which they built by the command of God, they came round by the Gulf of Arabia, crossed the Great Pacific Ocean, and landed on the western coast of South America.

[1876^](#) [Orson Pratt](#)

"The Book of Mormon--What It Is," in The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star, no. 44, Vol. 38, October 30, 1876, pp. 691-692

[The following is an extract from an article concerning the Book of Mormon, written by Orson Pratt, Church Historian, in December, 1874, for insertion in the Universal Cyclopaedia.]

The first edition of this wonderful book (meaning the Book of Mormon) was published early in 1830. . . . A small volume of plates of the first six books of this collection were made by the Prophet Nephi, nearly six centuries before Christ. Nephi gives a brief sketch of his father and family, who were commanded of God to leave Jerusalem six hundred years before Christ. They came to the eastern borders of the Red Sea, where they encamped, and were soon joined by two or three more families

from Jerusalem. This little company proceeded for many days in their journey along the eastern borders of the sea; after which they altered their course nearly eastward, and came to what they called the great waters; this must have been the borders of the Arabian Gulf or Indian Ocean. Here they were commanded to build a ship, on which they embarked, being directed continually in the ship's course by a miraculous instrument, prepared by the hand of the Lord for the purpose.

At length, after many sufferings and hardships, they landed on the western coast of South America, not far, as is believed, from the thirtieth degree of south latitude. . . .

Orson Pratt, Sen.

---Deseret News

Note* This is the first time that Orson Pratt described Lehi as landing on "the thirtieth degree of south latitude." In all previous articles he has just mentioned "Chili," or "the western coast of South America." This fact that he waited so long might tend to disqualify him as the originator of this specific information.

[1876^](#) [George M. Ottinger](#)

"Old America," in the *Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 11, No. 12, Salt Lake City, June 15, 1876, pp. 134-135.

In the "Conclusion" to his series entitled "Old America," George Ottinger writes:

A few years previous to the landing of Mulek, a colony under Lehi left Jerusalem (during the first year of Zedekiah's reign). They crossed the Pacific and landed on the western coast of South America, somewhere, we infer, near the present city of Lima in Peru. Lehi's people possibly built the great city and temple of Pachacamac, and after a time crossed the Andes, settling in Bolivia, in the vicinity and on the shores of Lake Titicaca. Others went north into New Granada, and in time united with the descendants of Mulek's people. The traditions of the Peruvians, as recorded by Montesinos, correspond precisely with the Book of Mormon in regard to the organization of this colony after landing on the American continent

Note* Ottinger has Lehi's party landing "near the present city of Lima in Peru." It is interesting that even though in the Sept. 15, 1842 edition of the Times and Seasons we find an editorial stating that Lehi landed "a little south of the Isthmus of Darien, this is the first time that this location (Peru) has been

proposed for Lehi's landing. The location of Lima, Peru is approximately 12 degrees south latitude. (See the map below) This location is quite a bit northward from Valparaiso, Chile, which is near the 30th degree south latitude, as previously proposed by Orson Pratt. In a 1919 Improvement Era article, Nephi Jensen, President of the Canadian Mission would also imply that the Nephites landed at the "great Sun-temple," in South America, which most probably is the one located in the ruins of Pachacamac near Lima, Peru--see notation.

[1876 Map: Latin America after the Wars for Independence (1826). Source: Hutton Webster, History of Latin America, Boston, D.C. Heath and Company, 1924, p. 129]

[1876^](#) [George M. Ottinger](#)

"Old America," in *The Latter Day Saints' Millennial Star*, No. 33, Vol. 38, August 14, 1876, pp. 517-519.

This is a reprint of Ottinger's June 15, 1897 article appearing in the Juvenile Instructor:

A few years previous to the landing of Mulek, a colony under Lehi left Jerusalem (during the first year of Zedekiah's reign). They crossed the Pacific and landed on the western coast of South America, somewhere, we infer, near the present city of Lima in Peru. Lehi's people possibly built the great city and temple of Pachacamac, and after a time crossed the Andes, settling in Bolivia, in the vicinity and on the shores of Lake Titicaca. Others went north into New Granada, and in time united with the descendants of Mulek's people. The traditions of the Peruvians, as recorded by Montesinos, correspond precisely with the Book of Mormon in regard to the organization of this colony after landing on the American continent. . . . --Juvenile Instructor

Note* This is the first time that any LDS (Brighamite) person has claimed that Lehi landed in Peru. For the relative location of Lima, Peru see the map below.

[1876 Illustration: The location of Lima, Peru, the location of the ruins of Pachacamac, and the location of Lake Titicaca. Paul R. Chessman, *Early America and The Book of Mormon: A Photographic Essay of Ancient America*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1972, p. 68]

Note* In April, 1963, at the Fourteenth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures B.Y.U., Carl Hugh Jones, Curator of the L.D.S. Museum would make a presentation entitled, "The Archaeological Painting of George M. Ottinger. He writes this summary:

George M. Ottinger, an early Utah artist, wa very interested in the archaeology of Mexico and painted many scenes in oils of the Conquest and of the ruins. As a natural outgrowth of this interest, he also did some extremely fine paintings of scenes in the Book of Mormon. His earliest known archaeological painting was done in 1867 and is entitled "The Last of the Aztecs." To the best of my knowledge he never visited any of the ruins but did have an extensive library of books about Mexico. In most cases, it is possible to find the illustrations in these books which provided the sketches for his paintings.

He started his Book of Mormon paintings with "The Baptism of Limhi" in 1872. From that time until his death in 1917, he must have finished approximately 100 paintings on the Book of Mormon.

1879 John Bernhisel

He lends his unbound manuscript papers (with his last-page Lehi's Travels statement) to the LDS Church to copy for the first time.

See the discussion in the 1845 notation.

1879^ James A. Little

"Book of Mormon Sketches," in Juvenile Instructor vol. 14 (September 15, October 1, 15 1879, pp. 209, 218-219, 232.

James A. Little writes the following:

Lehi, who led the second colony to America, emigrated from Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, (see first chapter, Book of Mormon) and (according to I Nephi, chapter iii) 600 years before Christ, or about 1,647 years after the Jaredites left the Tower of Babel. . .

Lehi, the leader of the second colony from Asia to America, from whom the present race of American Indians is descended, lived in that period of Jewish wickedness and apostasy immediately preceding the Babylonish captivity. . . . the Lord warned Lehi in a dream, that if he wished to escape the coming calamities, he must leave jerusalem, and go with his family into the wilderness, where he could prepare to journey to a land which should become the heritage of himself and children. . . . (p. 209)

While in this their first camp, by a river which the company called Laman, they were required by the Lord to gather all kinds of seeds, of fruit and grain, to take with them, but were not required to take animals, for the reason that the country where they were going to had been amply stocked with animal life, through the previous special providences of God (See Book of Ether, chapter iv.) . . .

This company which had collected by the river Laman, in the valley of Lemuel, near the Red Sea, for the colonization of a continent, consisted of Lehi and his wife Sariah, his four sons, Laman, Lemuel, Sam and Nephi, Zoram the former servant of Laban, Ishmael and his wife, his two sons and their wives, and his five daughters, eighteen in all. If the sons of Ishmael had any children we are not informed of the fact.

One evening the Lord commanded Lehi to continue his journey into the wilderness. . . . They took what remained of their provisions, the seeds they had gathered, and such articles of convenience as they could carry, and traveled four days in a south-easterly direction, where they camped in a place which they called Shazer.

We are not informed that his company took animals with them, but as Lehi had been a man of considerable wealth, they were doubtless well supplied with the usual means of travel, under similar circumstances. . . .

They traveled many days, guided by the compass which the Lord had furnished them, into the most fertile parts of the wilderness, and when weary they again rested themselves for a season. . . .

They again traveled many days in the same direction as before, and camped in a place called Nahom. . . . After leaving Nahom the party changed their course to nearly east. . . . (pp. 218-219)

After journeying eight years in the wilderness, they came to a land which they called Bountiful, on account of its abounding in fruits and wild honey. They had now arrived at the sea which they called Irreantum, meaning "many waters," and they pitched their tents on the shore.

As they evidently traveled around the western and southern coasts of Arabia, the sea they called Irreantum was probably the Sea of Arabia, of the present day. . . .

At this time the company probably numbered some thirty persons, and what would now be considered a small vessel would have afforded them very good accommodations for a sea voyage. . . . They probably sailed east across the Indian Ocean, through the immense cluster of islands lying off the south-eastern coast of Asia, into the broad Pacific Ocean, then south to the western coast of South America. ; . .

After sailing many days, and probably not less than fifteen thousand miles, their long-cherished hopes were realized by arriving upon the land of promise.

We have a tradition among us that the Prophet Joseph Smith said that they landed in the country now known as Chile, on the western coast of South America. Their subsequent history gives evidence of the correctness of this tradition. They pitched their tents and began to cultivate the earth. They planted

the seeds they had brought from their native land, from which they gathered a bountiful harvest. This company does not appear to have eaten grain or vegetables after leaving the shores of the Red Sea, unless they found some that grew spontaneously on the fertile spots of the Arabian wilderness, or on some of the islands, during their sea voyage. Their principal diet appears to have been the flesh of wild animals, and they doubtless carried the seeds with which they left their camp, by the river Laman, the entire journey. However, eight years was a long time to occupy in a land journey around the coasts of Arabia, and they must have passed through many changes not intimated to us in the short account of this journey we have in the Book of Mormon. (p. 232)

Note* One might jump to the conclusion from the bolded statement here that because the seeds grew, and the seeds were from Lehi's native land of Jerusalem (situated at close to 30o north latitude), then the only place that could accommodate the growth of the seeds would have to be located at the same latitude, either 30o north latitude or 30o south latitude (in Chile). One might further speculate that this information was based loosely on the Lehi's Travels statement. Going further, because Little mentions that "we have a tradition among us that the Prophet Joseph Smith said that they landed in the country now known as Chile, on the western coast of South America" all the evidence might seem to add up to not only Little's acquaintance with the Lehi's Travels statement, but a Joseph Smith connection to the Lehi's Travels statement.

These conclusions are without basis, however. No effort is made here to specify any latitudes, either in the description of Lehi's travels across Arabia or at his landing site in South America. Nor is any effort made to verify whether or not seeds from Jerusalem could grow at other latitudes along the coast of South America or Central America. In the context of Little's comments, the planting of seeds had nothing to do with latitude but was just the fulfillment of the Book of Mormon story in which it mentions that Lehi's party had brought seeds with them to the land of promise. Nevertheless, this seems to be the first time that anyone has directly linked the Prophet Joseph Smith with the idea that Lehi's party landed "in the country now known as Chile, on the western coast of South America."

One additional idea presented by Little seems to also contradict any acquaintance with the Lehi's Travels statement. Little writes that Lehi's party "evidently traveled around the western and southern coasts of Arabia," and that "eight years was a long time to occupy in a land journey around the coasts of Arabia." If Lehi "came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude; then, nearly east to the Sea of Arabia" as is mentioned in the Lehi's Travels statement, then they would not be inclined to travel "around the western and southern coasts of Arabia."

[1879 Orson Pratt](#)

Book of Mormon (Geographical Footnotes), 1879-1920

Orson Pratt's philosophy became very influential during pioneer days in the Church. This was the result of his years spent in publishing Church materials used in spreading the gospel. In 1879 a new edition of the Book of Mormon was printed which contained Pratt's footnotes describing geographical features and places mentioned in the text. For the next 40 years these geographical notes would have an enormous impact in the minds of the general LDS members. The footnotes were patterned after Pratt's hemispheric view of Book of Mormon lands. These footnotes were not deleted until 1921. Thus his ideas for the most part became a standard of Book of Mormon geography. Some of the geographical statements that were written in the footnotes are as follows:

1. The landing of Lehi is "believed to be on the coast of Chili, S. America." (1 Nephi 2:20)

14. The footnote states that the Lord brought Mulek into North America and Lehi into South America. (Helaman 6:10)

Sources: ^The Book of Mormon, Electrotpe edition, Liverpool: Printed and published by William Budge, 42, Islington, 1879; ^Joseph L. Allen, Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon, Orem, UT: BYU Print Services, 1989; see also a paper by ^V. Mack Sumner: "An Exploration of the Footnotes in the 1911 Edition, Used by the Talmage Committee" which was written for Daniel Ludlow's course--Graduate Religion 622, External Evidences--in August, 1967.

Note* The fact that these footnotes would be published with the text of the Book of Mormon is significant but does not carry an "Official" approval by the Church. At the present there is no primary documentary evidence that would definitely tell us that any of these ideas came directly from the prophet Joseph Smith, or whether Pratt just developed these ideas on his own. (However, see the 1880 George Reynolds notation)

[1879 Theoretical Model--HEMISPHERIC. Orson Pratt, Book of Mormon Footnotes, 1879 Edition]

[1880^ George Reynolds](#)

"The Lands of the Nephites: The Land of Nephi," in Juvenile Instructor Vol. 15, December 1, 1880, p. 274.

From an article on "The Lands of the Nephites, The Land of Nephi" regarding the landing place of Lehi's party, George Reynolds writes:

The exact place where Lehi and his little colony first landed on this continent is not stated in the Book of Mormon; (47)* [The figures refer to pages in the Book of Mormon, new edition.] but it is generally believed among the Latter-day Saints to have been on the coast of Chili. In fact it is widely understood that the Lord so informed the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Note* This comment that "the Lord so informed the Prophet Joseph Smith" that Lehi's landing site was "on the coast of Chili" comes just one year after the 1879 James A. Little comment (see notation). It is the first time such information was attributed to a revelation from the Lord to Joseph. Other than the Little commentary, one would have to wonder just what prompted George Reynolds to think that these ideas were "widely understood," but more importantly, what made him feel that this information came from a "revelation." and why he could feel confident in publishing such ideas in a Church sponsored magazine. George Reynolds' views on Book of Mormon geography were first published in serial form in The Juvenile Instructor from 15 November 1880 to 1 February 1881. This material was later placed in the same form in his book The Story of the Book of Mormon (see the 1888 notation).

There was no drawn maps included in these publications which illustrated Reynold's ideas, however they followed a general Hemispheric Model. In 1990, John Sorenson would make a detailed breakdown of this theoretical model. For these details, the reader is referred to A Chronology of LDS Thought on Book of Mormon Geography of the New World, volume 1 (see the 1880 notation).

[1880 Theoretical Model Reynolds HEMISPHERIC]

L.S. = South Amer. / N.N. = Panama / L.N. = North of Panama / Lehi's Landing = Chili

Source: George Reynolds, "The Lands of the Nephites: The Land of Nephi," in Juvenile Instructor Vol. 15, December 1, 1880]

[1880^ Heber Comer & Karl G. Maeser]

"Map," in J. A. and J. N. Washburn, An Approach to the Study of Book of Mormon Geography, Provo, Utah, 1939

On page 212 of their 1939 book, An Approach to the Study of Book of Mormon Geography, the Washburns reproduce a "map . . . carefully prepared" from "a large one made in 1880 by Brother Heber Comer, of Lehi, in the old Brigham Young Academy, under the personal direction of Dr. Karl G. Maeser." Karl G. Maeser was the president of Brigham Young Academy. This map (see below) notes that "Nephi

landed, B.C. 580" in a location in South America apparently just a little north of 30o south latitude. While the latitude lines are apparently drawn in, they are not marked, and there is no name specified on place of landing.

[1880 Heber Comer and Karl G. Maeser TRADITIONAL HEMISPHERIC]

L.S. = South America / N.N. = Panama / L.N. = Panama northward / H.C. = New York (implied) / Sidon = Magdalena River

Source: J. A. and J. N. Washburn, An Approach to the Study of Book of Mormon Geography, Provo, Utah, 1939. On page 212 they reproduce a "map . . . carefully prepared" from "a large one made in 1880 by Brother Heber Comer, of Lehi, in the old Brigham Young Academy, under the personal direction of Dr. Karl G. Maeser."

[1882^](#) [James A. Little](#)

A Compendium of the Doctrines of the Gospel Salt Lake City: Franklin D. Richards, George Q. Cannon and Sons Company, 1882, p. 289 Reprinted in 1884, 1886, 1892, 1898, Revised editions in 1914, 1925, 1992.

The Compendium was first published by Richards and Little in Liverpool, England in 1857. Yet the "Lehi's Travels" statement which appears below was not included in the first edition. A second edition, revised and enlarged, was published in Salt Lake City by George Q. Cannon and Sons Company in 1882, and it is from this edition that the statement is found. The "Lehi's Travels" statement is a note concerning the direction of Lehi's travels and was apparently written down by Frederick G. Williams in about 1836, during which time Williams served as scribe for Joseph Smith. This document was kept with Williams' personal papers even after his death in 1842. In 1864-65 the manuscript papers of Frederick G. Williams were lent to the LDS Church by his son Ezra. (see the discussion in the 1836 notation) The information in the Lehi's Travels statement also appears as a separate note on the last page of the Bernhisel manuscript which was written in 1845 but not given to the Church for copying until the year 1879 (see the discussion in the 1845 notation). The exact date in which the note was recorded by Bernhisel is not known. Neither the Williams document nor the Bernhisel note contain the words "Revelation to Joseph the Seer" as appears in the Compendium quote below.

The Compendium quote appears as follows on page 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 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.

Book of Mormon Chronology

. . . The Book of Mormon appears to furnish no clue to the date of Lehi's colony landing in South America. It is supposed to have been about twelve years after its departure from Jerusalem.

Note* Notice that contrary to the information contained in the notation for 1836, this statement appears to be attributed to Joseph Smith himself rather than Frederick G. Williams. The effect of this action should not be underestimated. In effect, it gave enormous authoritative weight to the hemispheric model of Book of Mormon geography as it would be quoted and referred to many times in future publications. For example, four years later in 1886, the prophet Joseph Smith would be given credit as the basis for the official position of the "Sunday Schools in Zion" that "Lehi landed in Chili in South America." (see the 1886 notation)

According to Frederick G. Williams III:

There is no known earlier historical evidence associating this specific statement with Joseph Smith. How then did the statement come to be connected with Joseph Smith and revelation? Perhaps, because the statement was written by Frederick G. Williams, who was Joseph's scribe and a counselor in the First Presidency for a time, and because it was written on a sheet with a known revelation (D&C 7), it was thought that Joseph must have dictated it. However, D&C 7 was received before Williams joined the Church, and was published in 1833. . . . The 1857 edition of the Compendium did not include this statement. (Frederick G. Williams III, "Did Lehi Land in Chile? An Assessment of the Frederick G. Williams Statement," F.A.R.M.S., 1988, p. 3-4.) See also Robert J. Matthews, "Notes on 'Lehi's Travels'," BYU Studies 12 (3), Spring 1972, pp. 312-14.

(See the notations for 1830, 1836, 1837, 1845, 1865, 1880, 1938, 1952, 1978, 1988.)

Note* Franklin D. Richards was ordained an Apostle Feb. 12, 1849 at the age of 27. He would live to the year 1899, but the influence of this Lehi's Travels statement would continue for a century in reprintings and revised editions of the Compendium.

[1883^](#) [George Q. Cannon](#)

The Life of Nephi, the Son of Lehi. Salt Lake City, Utah: Published by the Juvenile Instructor Office, 1883

This book was written "By George Q. Cannon, Of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." It was "Designed for the Instruction and Encouragement of Young Latter-day Saints," and was "The Ninth Book of the Faith-Promoting Series. In writing about the life of Nephi, Cannon includes some interesting notes on Book of Mormon geography gleaned from scholarly writings which represents not only some study on the matter, but a keen interest in Book of Mormon geography and culture. Thus, the material in this book should be of interest, especially in light of other statements by Elder Cannon on the subject of Book of Mormon geography. Those concerning the travels of Lehi are as follows:

[Preface] Some years since the desire took possession of me to write the life of Nephi . . .

[p. 15-16] He [the Lord] commanded him [Lehi] that he should take his family and depart into the wilderness. . . . He took his family, his provisions and tents, and started. After traveling in the wilderness he came to the Red Sea, and he continued his journey near its borders. He soon reached a valley by the side and near the mouth of a river, which emptied into the Red Sea. Here he pitched his tent, and the family remained encamped sometime. . . .

[p. 39] After receiving the compass they gathered up all that they could carry with them, and the remainder oft he provisions which the Lord had given them, and seed of every kind, and their tents, and crossing the river Laman, they traveled for four days, in nearly a south by south-east direction until they came to a place which they called Shazer. . . .

From this place they traveled in the same course-S.S.E.-following the direction of the compass, which led in the most fertile parts of the desert, and which were near the Red Sea. (note*)

Note* Cannon notes here concerning the compass: "Some people contend that the compass is no new invention; but that the ancients were acquainted with it. They say that it was impossible for Solomon to have sent ships to Ophir, Tarshish and Parvaim, without this useful instrument. They insist that it was impossible for the ancients to be acquainted with the attractive virtue of the magnet, and to be ignorant of its polarity; nay, they affirm that this property of the magnet is plainly mentioned in the

book of Job, where the loadstone is mentioned by the name of topaz, or the stone that turns itself."
(Ency. Brit.)

[p. 40] In looking through the description of a journey in this country by a traveler of the name of Wallin (Jour. of Geog. Soc., 1854, page 161) we were struck with the remarkable coincidence between the direction in which he traveled and that traveled by Lehi and company, upwards of twenty-four centuries before. He says:

The direction was in general during the whole of our route S.S.E., according to the rule which the people of the land give a traveler about to traverse this desert, 'so to direct his course that he always has the polar star on his left shoulderblade.'"

[] For some time after leaving this camping place they traveled S.S.E., and stopped at a suitable spot. Here Ishmael died, and was buried at a place which was called Nahom.

[pp. 49-51] Contented once more to be led, the company resumed their journey in an easterly direction, until they came to a land which they called Bountiful, because of the abundance of its fruit and wild honey. This was on the sea shore. They camped upon the shore and called the sea "Irreantum," the meaning of which is many waters. The travels in the wilderness covered a space of eight years. . . .

The direction in which they traveled after the death of Ishmael is that which would lead a company to-day into the most fertile region in Arabia. One traveler in speaking of a region, if not that called by Lehi and his company Bountiful, certainly adjoining it, says:

"As we crossed these [open fields] with lofty almond, citron and orange trees, yielding a delicious fragrance on either hand, exclamations of astonishment and admiration burst from us. Is this Arabia? we said: this the country we had looked on heretofore a desert? Verdant fields of grain and sugar cane, stretching along for miles, are before us; streams of water flowing in all direction, intersect our path; and the happy and contented appearance of the peasants agreeable helps to fill up the smiling picture. The atmosphere was delightfully clear and pure; and as we trotted joyously along, giving or returning the salutation of peace or welcome, I could almost fancy I had reached that 'Araby the blest,' which I had been accustomed to regard as existing only in the fictions of our poets." (Travels in Arabia, Vol 1, pp. 115, 116.)

Captain Haines, whose manuscript journal is quoted from in Forster's Arabia, p. 452, says of this part of Arabia:

The whole province of Hydramant is represented as abundant in fertilization and richly covered hills; the palm groves, magnificent; plentiful supplies of water, and, indeed, every beauty and perfection necessary to make paradise of this earth.

Palgrave (Journal of Geo. society Vol. 34, 1864, p. 147) in speaking of the province of Batinah, in the district of Oman, says: "Those lands lying between the sea and Jebel-Akhdar, are especially rich in produce, except where the rocky coast-line interferes." He describes the trees of that region as the coconut, the date palms, the manga tree, and other fruit-bearing trees, and says, "it is indeed the garden of the Peninsula." Speaking of a district adjoining this, he describes fertile valleys, full of rich vegetation and considerable produce; vines, whose wine is said to be good, abound in the slopes. "Bees abound in the mountain, and furnish excellent honey of a whitish color" (p. 148)

The lapse of twenty-four centuries makes wonderful changes in the earth's surface, but here is a land which is to-day exactly answering the description which Nephi gave of it- a land to which, because of its much fruit and also wild honey, they gave the appropriate name of Bountiful. Not even the honey in the mountains is wanting to distinguish it to-day. This traveler, in speaking of the mountains of that region, says: "The mountains themselves are sometimes bare-more often wooded-at least partially so." NO doubt the mountains were wooded at the time Lehi and company reached there; for Nephi, as we shall see as we proceed with our history, needed timber convenient to the sea. In general outline the Arabian sea-shore offers little variety, being mostly mountainous; but there are exceptions to this as we have seen. Some parts of this shore present regions of remarkable fertility. It doubtless did the same at the time of which we write. . . .

They had reached an earthly paradise. No occasion now to hunt for game to supply food necessary for their wants. No suffering from hunger or thirst nowhere, upon all hands, was everything in profusion necessary to sustain life-fruit of the most delicious kind. Dates form the staple of Arab food to-day, and probably they had the Kholas date-for date palms abound in all that region-the fruit of which is amber-colored, and of exquisite flavor. This fruit called the king of dates, grows in a district near the sea, and is noted all over Arabia for its superiority over every other variety. An abundance of honey;. Drinking water, sweet and plentiful. And fish, too . . . Here Nephi rested with the others "for the space-of many days" . . .

[p. 53-] There is nothing said in the record which has come to us respecting the method of travelling adopted by Lehi and his company in the wilderness-whether they had beasts of burden or conveyances of any kind, or not. That they did not go afoot and carry upon their own backs that which they had with them, is so plain, we think, that no one who reflects upon the subject will entertain such an idea. . . .

We think that the popular impression is that the children of Israel upon their journey to the promised land of Canaan knew nothing about wagons and had no use for them. But the fact is, they traveled in heavy marching order. They had their wives, children, effects, and indeed all their worldly possessions with them. Upon one occasion the princes of Israel, each a representative of one of the tribes, brought an offering of six covered wagons and twelve oxen and gave them to Moses. That is they each gave an ox and a half a wagon. These were given to the Levites for their use (Numbers vii, 2-9). In the country which Lehi and his company were traveling it was then the fashion, as it has been through all the intervening centuries and still is, to use animals for carrying burdens. The camel, "the ship of the desert," as he has been aptly called, has proved of inestimable value for this purpose to the inhabitants of the Arabian peninsula. Horses and asses attain their greatest excellence in that land; they are, however, more employed for riding than for loads. But the camel would be of as great use to Lehi and his fellow-travelers as it was and is to the Arabs. He and his sons must have known of its value and its adaptability for the purposes they needed. We think it very likely, therefore, that they used camels to carry their baggage, and probably their wives and children and themselves. Travelers inform us that in pasture land Arabia is singularly fortunate, and that the very desert supplies through the greater part of its extent sufficient browse for camels.

[p. 65] After they put forth to sea they were driven by the wind towards the promised land. We are not informed as to whether they used sails or other means to propel their vessel; but as they were "driven before the wind" it is most likely they had sails. They steered their ship by the direction of the compass which the Lord had prepared for them. (note*)

Note* Cannon notes the following on page 68:

In this connection it may be of interest to know something of the progress which had been made in the art of navigation at the time Lehi and his company made this wonderful voyage by direction of the Lord. The earliest record of the practice of this art after the construction of the ark by Noah-excepting the account we have in the Book of Mormon of the voyage of Jared and his brother and their colony-is that of the Egyptians, who at a very remote period are said to have established commercial relations with India. This traffic was carried on between the Arabian gulf and the western coast of India, across the Indian ocean. It may be that Lehi himself might have been familiar with a famous expedition by sea which was fitted out by Necho II, king of Egypt; for as near as we can ascertain this was done in his day. This Necho was the king of Egypt against whom Josiah, king of Judah, fought when he received his death-wound (II Chron. xxxv. 22). He fitted out a fleet in the Red Sea, and having engaged some expert Phoenician pilots and sailors, he sent them on a voyage of discovery along the coast of Africa. They were ordered to start from the Arabian Gulf, and come round through the Pillars of Hercules (now the straits of Gibraltar) into the Mediterranean, and so return to Egypt. This voyage was a very daring one for those day. Through it the peninsular form of Africa was ascertained, and the cape of Good Hope was doubled about twenty-one centuries before it was seen by Diaz [Bartholomew Diaz discovered it in 1487, in the

reign of John II, king of Portugal, but did not land. He named it Capo Tormento, from the storms he experienced there; but the king afterwards changed its name to Cape of Good Hope; and Emanuel, his successor, sent Vasco da Gama, in 1497, with orders to double it and proceed to India (Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians*, 1, 2, pp. 109, 110)] or doubled by Vasco de Gama. The vessels of the Egyptians were frequently of large dimensions, and were generally propelled by oars, though they understood to a certain extent the use of sails. We read of one vessel in later times carrying as many as 400 sailors, 4,000 rowers, and nearly 3,000 soldiers.

There can be no doubt but that the ship upon which Lehi and his company embarked was in every respect superior for the purpose for which it was designed to any vessel known among men at that time. The Lord had directed its construction. He knew what was needed-the capacity required, the strain to which it would be subjected from the winds and the waves, and the length of time it would be upon the ocean in making the voyage-and it must have been admirably adapted to meet all these wants.

[p. 69] They landed and pitched their tents, and they acknowledged that the Lord had indeed fulfilled His promises unto them. He had guided them through the wilderness, had enabled them to construct a vessel, in which He had brought them safely across the mighty breadth of ocean which extended from the coast of Arabia to the coast of what is now called South America, or as they, with good reason, called it, "The Promised Land." The prophet Joseph, in speaking of their place of landing, said (note*) it was on the coast of the country now known as Chili-a country which possesses a genial, temperate and healthy climate.

Note* Cannon notes the Lehi's Travels statement: "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." But he does not cite the source.

[1884](#)

(abt RLDS Commission)

St. Louis Republican Interview Mid-July 1884, Richmond, Missouri. Printed in the St. Louis Republican, July 16, 1884

Interest has been revived in questions relating to the origin of the Church of the Latter Day Saints and the authenticity of the manuscript from which the Book of Mormon was printed, and which is now being

compared with the various editions of that book by a commission now sitting at Richmond, Missouri. . .
.[in the possession of David Whitmer]

The following are the members of the commission: Rev. Joseph Smith of Lamoni, Decatur county, Iowa, president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ, commonly called Latter Day Saints, and editor-in-chief of the Saints' Herald. . . . William H. Kelley of Kirtland, Ohio, . . . Alexander H. Smith of Independence, Mo., . . . He is the second son of the prophet, Joseph Smith. Thomas W. Smith of Independence, Mo. . . .

Thomas W. Smith

This gentleman is a cousin of Joseph and Alexander, and in charge of the Australian mission. He is a gentleman of learning and extensive research in the literature of theology. He gave a running sketch of the Book of Mormon and what it taught. The history told by him covers 600 years before Christ and extends 400 years subsequent to the beginning of the Christian era. After the departure from Jerusalem the Nephites and the Lamanites became divided and the Nephites in consequence of the turbulence and fierce wars were finally destroyed except a portion who united with the deserters and were identified and absorbed by the Lamanites. This colony came to this continent before Christ, landing as is supposed in Peru, South America.

Source: ^Lyndon W. Cook, ed. David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness. Orem, Utah: Grandin Book Company, 1991, pp. 136-148.

[1884^ J. R. F.](#)

"American Antiquities," in the Juvenile Instructor 19 (August 15, 1884), p. 250.

From the Book of Mormon we learn that a civilized race landed on the coast of South American somewhere near Cobiga, the sea port of Bolivia. Their first permanent settlement was in the region of Northern or Central Peru. In this region, Mr. Squires claims, are the oldest American ruins.

They were driven from there by barbarians and next settled in Columbia.

Note* This is the first and possibly only source I can find for this idea that Lehi landed "near Cobiga, the sea port of Bolivia." The author does not include any other details in this article as to why he

chooses this location. Actually, the country of Bolivia is now a land-locked country without any port. The earliest map I could find was from 1907 (see below). On this map there is a coastal city of "Cobija" marked which would correspond very nicely to the "Cobiga" noted above. Cobija is situated between the 22nd and 23rd south latitude and although it is part of Chile, it is on the west of Bolivia. Whether the above author misread the map (thinking that "Cobiga" was part of Bolivia) or whether in 1884 Bolivia did actually have an extension of land to the sea, or whether the phrase "Cobiga, the sea port of Bolivia" only implies that this particular sea port was a main seaport used extensively by Bolivia (and thus "the sea port of Bolivia") I am unable to say at this point in time.

Note* At present I do not know who the initials J. R. F. represents.

[1884 Map illustrating the location of Cobija. Taken from a Military Intelligence copy of a Map of Bolivia. The author is listed as Pedro Portillo. It was originally published in Lima by Carlos Fabbri, 1907. An attached note in spanish says that this map includes the latest explorations and verified studies from 1900 to 1906. HBLL Call Number G 5310 1907 .V3]

[1886^ A. H. Cannon](#)

Questions and Answers on the Book of Mormon: Designed and Prepared Especially for the Use of the Sunday Schools in Zion, Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1886, p. 24

In the Preface we find the following:

It affords us very much pleasure to be able to present this little volume to the public at this time. . . . to touch upon the most important items of history and doctrine, so that by a study of the lessons herein contained a good idea may be obtained of the Book of Mormon. . . . And our most earnest desire will be gratified if these questions and answers can but induce the young people of Zion to search with greater diligence for the valuable truths contained in the revelations of ancient and modern times, all of which are given the Latter-day Saints for their instruction.--The Publishers

So with that perspective we find the following question and answer on page 24:

"19Q. Where does the Prophet Joseph Smith tell us they landed?"

"A. On the coast of Chili in South America."

[1886?^](#) ??

Plain Facts for Students of the Book of Mormon with a Map of the Promised Land, SLC: N.p., 1886.

This 4-page pamphlet does not make mention of either its author, publisher, or date of publication. From

some details in the text, however, we can piece together some parameters. The author cites Book of Mormon verses according to the arrangement in the LDS editions so we might surmise that he is LDS rather than RLDS. He cites the works of Bancroft, who published in 1883. He also cites a letter from President John Taylor, dated 1886. At the end of the tract the author also refers to President Taylor in the present tense ("our worthy president . . . is encouraging the spirit of missions among the Lamanites"). President John Taylor died in the year 1887, thus an approximate date of 1886 (or possibly 1887) can be affixed here.

The details of the text are entirely describing a model of Book of Mormon geography in the New World. The author does not note the landing place of Lehi, but he does say the following on page 1:

At about the junction of 9 deg. n. lat.[itude] and 75 deg. w. long.[itude] is situated the great valley of Cenu, which is traversed by the river of the same name. The actual city of Mompox is near this valley, which runs close to the Dabaiba mountains.

The said Dabaiba and their southern Cauca mountains form the eastern line of the Choco valley. . . .

From the south end of the main Dabaiba range and leading south-east are found several trails going towards the great Cauca valley which has the reputation of being the finest of South America for its wealth, health and fine scenery. It measures from four to six thousand feet above the sea level, and with its ever cool nights and serene days presents a perpetual spring, finer still than the valleys of New Guatamala and the city of Mexico. This locality forms part of the first inheritance where both Nephites and Lamanites lived together for about ten years or more; till after the death of their father Lehi (Alma 22:27,28. 2 Nephi 5:6)

Note* The first question one might ask is, Where is the Cauca Valley? According to the description of the Joel Ricks (1904--see Bulletin article & map), the Cauca valley runs parallel and on the west of the Magdalena river valley (but extending farther south), and is situated in the northern part of South America (Colombia) a little south of the Isthmus.

The second question which follows is, Can we equate the land of first inheritance in this Cauca Valley with the location of Lehi's landing? This requires a little background. The first thing that is apparent is that the Cauca Valley is NOT on the seashore, it is "six thousand feet above the sea level." This would have required a movement from the Pacific shores where Lehi landed, but where was that landing? Was it due west or some other place? Because Ricks' article specifically mentions the Cauca valley, the "Plain Facts" theory might be similar to the theory espoused by Ricks, in which Lehi is proposed to have landed

in Chile but moved northward to the Cauca Valley in order to establish "the land of first inheritance." (See the 1940 Ricks notations in the Geography Statements volume of this work for more detail on the subject of Nephi's travels northward from the landing site.) It is also worthy of note that the details of the map in "Plain Facts" are similar to the Hemispheric model map proposed by Heber Comer and Karl Maeser in 1880. Thus we should be very wary here of equating the location Lehi's land of first inheritance with Lehi's landing site.

[1886? Map: Outline Map of the Occidental Promised Land. Author unknown, Plain Facts for Students of the Book of Mormon, with a Map of the Promised Land, (n.p., n.d.)]

1887^ George Q. Cannon

"Editorial," *Juvenile Instructor*, 22/4 (1887): p. 221.

In 1887 President George Q. Cannon wrote the following editorial which appeared in the *Juvenile Instructor*:

Among our own people there is considerable anxiety manifested to identify the sites of the ancient cities of the Nephites and to locate the exact spots where the stirring scenes described in the Book of Mormon were enacted. There are a few points which can be identified. The hill known as Cumorah among the Nephites and as Ramah among the Jaredites, is a spot which we are now familiar with, it being the place where Moroni concealed the records of his father, and to which the Prophet Joseph was directed by his angel guide. While the Book of Mormon does not give us all the information necessary to identify the river Sidon under its modern name, it is understood that the Prophet Joseph communicated to some individual or individuals that it was the stream now known as the River Magdalena. It is also known that the landing place of Lehi and his family was near what is now known as the city of Valparaiso, in the Republic of Chili. The book itself does not give us this information, but there is no doubt of its correctness. Beyond these few points, it may be said that the sites of the cities of the Nephites are left to conjecture. . . .

I understand that attempts are now made to illustrate Book of Mormon history by the aid of maps, and the children are taught to look upon them as being, at least, tolerably correct.

Assistant Superintendent George Goddard wrote to me a short time since upon the subject of getting up a map under the auspices of the Sunday School Union, that would illustrate Book of Mormon history. He thought that it would be a great advantage to our children to have a map that would be deemed authentic for this purpose. His proposition led to correspondence upon the subject, and I think he became convinced that the suggestion was impracticable.

I have no confidence myself in the maps which I understand are being used. I am quite satisfied that in some particulars, at least, they are incorrect. In this opinion I am not alone. Others who have given the Book of Mormon considerable study think the authors of the maps are mistaken upon many points.

Now I think it better that we should have no maps at all than to have an incorrect one. It is better not to attempt to teach our children upon the geography of the Book of Mormon than to teach them by means of agencies which are unreliable and misleading. If our children be permitted to conceive incorrect ideas concerning the location of the lands inhabited by the Nephites and the sites of their cities, it will be difficult to eradicate them. Therefore I am clearly of the opinion that it is unwise to use means of this character to illustrate Book of Mormon history.

Note* It is interesting that while dismissing the study of Book of Mormon geography as "unwise," "unreliable," and "misleading," George Q. Cannon has no reservations about stating "a few points which can be identified," namely the location of the Hill Cumorah in New York, the location of the river Sidon as the River Magdalena in Colombia, South America, and the location of Lehi's landing to be "near what is now known as the city of Valparaiso, in the Republic of Chili," in South America. In declaring these "few points" Cannon completely ignores the point that he has inadvertently (or perhaps purposefully) set limits on Book of Mormon geography, and thus, in part, has defined the Book of Mormon geographical map. Additionally, in declaring that there are only "a few points which can be identified," George Q. Cannon says nothing about the identification of "the ancient city of Manti" by Joseph Smith while he was in northern Missouri in 1838. (see the 1838 notation) This should give the reader some perspective to the words Elder Cannon would utter in his 1890 address to all members of the Church denouncing Book of Mormon geography--see 1890 notation.

There are some details in the quote by George Q. Cannon for which I have no known documentary source at the present time. I know of no documented incident in which "Joseph Smith . . . told some of his followers that the Magdalena River is the Book of Mormon river Sidon" or that Lehi and his family "landed near the Chilean city of Valparaiso." The first time I find the city of Valparaiso mentioned as Lehi's landing place is in a December 1, 1866 article by Orson Pratt in the Millennial Star. (See also the Feb. 11, 1872 discourse by Orson Pratt recorded in the Journal of Discourses [Vol. 14, pp. 324-331]) In that 1872 discourse Pratt also names the river Magdalena and implies that it was the river Sidon. Pratt does not give any source for his information, let alone that of Joseph Smith. Whether Orson Pratt was one of the "followers" Cannon referred to who Joseph Smith "told" of these things is also not documented that I know of. I should also note that Valparaiso is at a latitude of thirty-three degrees south, which is somewhat different than the Lehi's Travels statement which places Lehi's landing at "thirty degrees south latitude." However, the city of Valparaiso seems to be the closest large port city to thirty degrees latitude (see the maps below). While it is certainly possible that Joseph Smith said something about Lehi landing at Valparaiso to some of his followers, it is also reasonable to theorize that Orson Pratt (or someone else) might have extrapolated his views from ideas communicated to him by Joseph F. Smith. Sometime between 1864-1865, Ezra Williams, the son of Frederick G. Williams had loaned his father's papers to the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City. In 1865, Joseph F. Smith, a

fellow member of the Council of the Twelve and Church historian wrote a note (Personal Letterbooks) in which he detailed the Lehi's Travels statement and then said that it had been copied from F. G. Williams own handwriting. At this time there still had not been any published statement mentioning "latitude" with regards to Lehi's travels or landing site. Thus it might be implied that this was the first time that knowledge of "latitude" had been associated with Lehi's landing site within the LDS Church. If Joseph F. Smith communicated this information to Orson Pratt, then Pratt could have taken the Lehi's statement mentioning Lehi's landing site at "thirty degrees south latitude" and located the nearest large port city (Valparaiso) to that location.

Cannon was born Jan. 11, 1827, at Liverpool England. Cannon was made an apostle in 1859 and Orson Pratt, also an ordained apostle, didn't die until the year 1881.

[1887 Illustration: Maps showing the relative location of Valparaiso, Chile, the proposed landing site for Lehi's party.]

[1888^](#) [George Reynolds](#)

The Story of the Book of Mormon, SLC: J. H. Parry, 1888. Reprinted in 1898,1957, 1980.

In the Preface to this book we find the following:

"This volume presents one unique feature, in that it is the first attempt made to illustrate the Book of Mormon; and we have pleasure in realizing that the leading illustrations are the work of home artists. To break fresh ground in such a direction is no light undertaking; the difficulties are numerous, none more so than the absence of information in the Book of Mormon of the dress and artificial surroundings of the peoples whose history it recounts. Each artist has given his own ideas of the scenes depicted . . .

Although this book contained illustrations and would become popular, it would not give much added details to Lehi's journey from Jerusalem to the promised land. Reynolds writes:

Chapter I (1 Nephi chap. 1 to 4)-- When Lehi and his family left Jerusalem they traveled southward to the borders of the Red Sea. There they pitched their tents and rested for a season in a valley near a river which emptied into the sea. . . .

Chapter III (1 Nephi chap. 16 to 18)-- . . . According to the command of the Lord the company gathered their provisions, their tents, their seeds, and other things and again started on their long and oftentimes wearisome journey. They traveled a little east of south, and after four days again rested at a place to which they gave the name Shazer. Here they hunted and killed game for food. When they had

obtained enough for present use they again started travelling in very much the same direction, and keeping near the eastern shore of the Red Sea. . . .

The journey continued for a long time. The company would travel for a few days, then rest and hunt, then again take up the line of march as the compass directed. It generally guided them through the most fertile portions of the desert. . . . Before long, Ishmael, who was an aged man, died, at a place which they named Nahom. . . .

From this time the compass changed the course of their travel and they journeyed almost directly eastward. This must have taken them across the peninsula of Arabia to its eastern coast. It took them eight years to make the journey, during which time a number of children were born . . .

They had great joy when they came to the sea. They gave to it the name of Irreantum, which word means many waters. The land on the coast they called Bountiful, because of its much fruit and wild honey. While they rested on the sea shore the Lord gave Nephi a new command. It was that he should build a ship to carry the company across the ocean. . . . At first Nephi's brothers would not help him in the least. . . . After this they went to work and helped Nephi build the ship; and a good ship it was, the Lord having directed the way in which it should be fashioned.

When the vessel was finished the Lord told Lehi and his people to go on board. . . . A favorable wind sprang up and they were swiftly carried towards the promised land. First they crossed the Indian Ocean, then the South Pacific Ocean, and after many days reached the west coast of South America. They landed at a point near where the city of Valparaiso, in Chili, now stands. . . .

Chapter IV (1 Nephi chap. 18 to 2 Nephi chap. 4)-- . . . The description given by Nephi of the region where the colony landed exactly corresponds with what we know of the country now called Chili; and it was on its coast, the Prophet Joseph Smith informs us, that the Nephites landed, and there they established their first homes. . . . (Chap. 4, p. 1)

Chapter LXV (The lands of the Nephites . . .)-- . . . The exact place where Lehi and his little colony landed on this continent is not stated in the Book of Mormon: but it is generally believed among the Latter-day Saints to have been on the coast of Chili in thirty degrees south latitude. In fact, the Prophet Joseph Smith so stated. We do not think it possible, without divine revelation, to determine with accuracy the identical spot where Lehi and his colony landed. We believe that the coast line of that region has entirely changed since those days. Even if we do not take into consideration the overwhelming convulsions that took place at the crucifixion of our Lord, which changed the entire face of nature, there remains the general elevation or subsistence of the land which is continually taking place the world over. Some coasts are rising, some are falling. The land in South America, on its western or Pacific shores, has long been rising, some think for centuries. If this be so the rise of an inch a year would entirely change the configuration of the sea shore, and give this generation shallows and dry land, where but a few centuries ago there were deep waters. . . . For all we know a huge mountain may now cover the spot, or it may be hidden beneath the blue waters of the Pacific, scores of miles away from any present landing place.

Chapter LXIX (The Lands of Antum . . .)-- . . . The course traveled by Lehi and his people has been revealed with some detail. The Prophet Joseph Smith states: 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.

With regard to the course of Mulek and his company we are left entirely in the dark; all we are told is that they landed in the northern continent. There is an understanding among the Latter-day Saints that this party traveled westward from Jerusalem. Some think they went first to Egypt under the guidance of the Prophet Jeremiah; then by the Mediterranean Sea either to Spain or Morocco, thence by ship across the Atlantic. Others fancy they went direct by ship from Palestine.

Source: ^George Reynolds, *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, 3rd ed., Chicago: Henry C. Etten and Co., 1888. (GospelLink 2001)

Note* It is interesting that on the one hand Reynolds moves towards a specific location for the landing of Lehi, tying it to a revelation of the Prophet Joseph Smith, saying that "it is generally believed among the Latter-day Saints to have been on the coast of Chili in thirty degrees south latitude. In fact, the Prophet Joseph Smith so stated." In saying that "it is generally believed among the Latter-day Saints," the reader should not jump to any hasty conclusions that this phrase means that there were numerous people in the Church who had personally heard Joseph say such a thing. By consulting the Appendix flow-chart, "Chronological Summary of Proposed Landing Sites For Lehi," the reader will see that nothing to that effect was ever published until 1779 by James A. Little, and later in 1882 by James A. Little and Franklin D. Richards. One should also notice that these statements came subsequent to the Frederick G. Williams papers (which included the Lehi's Travels statement) being given to the Church in 1864-65, and specifically noted by Joseph F. Smith who was then working in the Church Historian's office. So it may be that these ideas were only "generally believed" subsequent to 1865. (See the 1865 notation)

Also interesting here is the fact that Reynolds moves away from naming the specific site, stating: "We do not think it possible, without divine revelation, to determine with accuracy the identical spot where Lehi and his colony landed. We believe that the coast line of that region has entirely changed since those days." This second perspective would seem to be the one later used by President Joseph F. Smith in denying that any revelation had been received regarding Lehi's landing site--See the 1918 Joseph F. Smith statement. It should be noted that Reynolds served as Secretary to the First Presidency.

[1888^](#) [B. H. Roberts](#)

"A New Witness For God" in The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star, 50, Monday, June 11, 1888, Chapter v., p. 377

B. H. Roberts first published a ten-piece article entitled "A New Witness For God" in the Millennial Star in 1888. These articles became the basis upon which he first published his 3-volume New Witnesses for God as a YMMIA course study for youth (1903-1906) and later his 3-volume published work by the same name (New Witnesses for God) in 1909 (see notations). The following comes from his 1888 articles:

For several years they [Lehi's party] wandered through the wilderness of Arabia, until they came to the coasts of the Arabian Sea. There they constructed a vessel by command of God, and sailing in a south easterly direction landed on the west coast of South America, 30 degrees south latitude. (50:377)

Note* Roberts did not choose to include any maps these publications which illustrated his ideas, but there was no reason to do so when it appears that he espoused a general Hemispheric Model similar to Orson Pratt's footnotes. In 1990, John Sorenson would make a detailed breakdown of this theoretical model. For these details, the reader is referred to A Chronology of LDS Thought on Book of Mormon Geography of the New World, volume 1 (see the 1888 notation). Significantly, by 1909, Roberts would include with these publications some reservations concerning the authoritative validity of the Lehi's Travels statement. (see the 1909 notation).

[1888 Theoretical Model B. H. Roberts HEMISPHERIC]

L. S. = South Amer. / N. N. = Panama / L. N. = North of Panama / Lehi's Landing = Chile

Source: B. H. Roberts, "A New Witness For God" in The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star, 50, Monday, June 11, 1888, Chapter v., p. 377]

[1888^](#) [H. A. Stebbins](#) (RLDS)

"The Story of the Book of Mormon." Autumn Leaves, Vol. 1, No. 7 (July) pp. 306-310

[p. 308] (Chapter 5- . . . Lehi and his Colony Journey to the Indian Ocean . . .) And they [Lehi's party] came to the shore upon what we call the western coast of South America, probably landing in the country now called Peru, or in Colombia (note i--see pages 309-310)

We do not know just where they begun their settlement, but evidently by the history is must have been away from the sea and from the mountains.

[1888^ "Hagoth"\[George Reynolds\]](#)

"The Book of Mormon Land," in *Juvenile Instructor* 23 (1 October 1888-1 December 1888): pp. 290, 307, 323, 338, 354-55.

In this article, for the very first time, we find a more detailed correlation of Lehi's journey from Jerusalem to the Promised land with the known historical world of Lehi's time. George Reynolds was assisting George Q. Cannon in publishing the *Juvenile Instructor* at this time. Sometimes in writing multiple pieces for publication, these men would use pseudonyms rather than repetitively use their own name. "Hagoth" writes:

Journey from Jerusalem to the Promised Land-- The Book of Mormon does not give us as full an account of the journey from Jerusalem as we would wish, but enough is said to enable us to locate the route pretty correctly. After leaving Jerusalem they "came down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea, and they journeyed in the wilderness in the borders nearer the Red Sea." After they had traveled three days in the wilderness, they came to a river flowing into the Red Sea, which they called Laman. In a little valley near the mouth of this river they made an encampment.

Just south of the Dead Sea and extending to the Gulf of Akabah, an arm of the Red Sea, is a long narrow valley, on either side of which are high desert plains. In ancient times this valley was pretty well watered, here and there little fountains existed to gladden the weary Arab traveler who passed this way to go down into Egypt. The stone city of Petra was built on the eastern side of the valley about midway between the two seas. The route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea passed through this valley.

[Note* This is the first time that the specific route to the "Gulf of Akabah" from Jerusalem has been detailed by an LDS author]

At the head of the Gulf of Akabah is a little village called by the same name. It is kept up principally by the caravans that pass through it en route from Egypt to Mecca. The caravan route to-day after leaving Akabah leaves the gulf and passes to the left of a mountain parallel to it for a distance of about one hundred miles, where it again comes nearer the sea at a point where the gulf and sea unite. From this point to the ocean the mountains are from ten to forty miles distant from the sea. The intervening space is a barren sandy plain, with here and there an oasis or fertile spot, caused by the little streams which rise in the mountains but are lost in the sands as soon as they reach the plain. The route follows closely the base of the mountain until it reaches about the 21o north latitude where it branches, one part turning to the east to the table-land to Mecca, and the other continuing on about one hundred and forty miles or more to where a valley opens towards the east through which it passes to the table-land and crosses Arabia just south of the great desert.

[Note* Since I wrote the notes inserted here I came across an earlier 1883 work by George Q. Cannon containing for the first time the details of Lehi's route. Much of what follows might apply to that earlier book. Check the information which follows in this note with what was written previously by George Q. Cannon in his 1883 Life of Nephi. This is the first time a specific route for Lehi has been coordinated with a historical trail or trails. If I can interpret correctly (seeing that no map has been provided here), the trail described above would run along the eastern coast of the Red Sea until it reached 210 north latitude which would be the approximate location today of the city of Jeddah. From there one branch would supposedly turn eastward to go inland a short distance to reach Mecca. The other route would continue on down the coast for about 150 miles to the present city of Al Qunfidhah. Here the trail would turn inland (starting about 190 north latitude) ascending the mountain range through a valley to the other side (or "table land") and then continuing on southward until it reached the southwestern border of the Rub Al Khali or great desert. From here the trail would turn eastward skirting the southern border of the great desert until it reached present day Oman.

What is significant here is that this historical caravan route would not be mentioned, commented upon, or followed for another 52 years (see the 1940 Joel Ricks notation and map), then 10 more years would go by before Hugh Nibley provided any details (see the 1950 notation and map), and beyond that it would take 26 more years before the Hiltons actually traveled the route (see the 1976 notation and map).]

The article continues:

It is quite probable that in all their journeyings the Nephites would choose that route which was open and free from natural obstacles. As the route above outlined traverses the most natural road, and answers so closely to the description given in the Book of Mormon we conclude the two roads are identical. Furthermore about one hundred miles south of the point where the road first comes near the Red Sea proper, there is found to-day the bed of an ancient river. It appears that at one time rain fell more abundantly in this region than at present. Many passages in the Bible strengthen this opinion, while many writers claim that the country to-day could not (without abundant rainfall) sustain the population ascribed to it anciently. Be this as it may, a river has existed there, in the same section where Lehi located his river Laman.

[Note* I hesitate to comment on the location of this river without any Bible passages actually being quoted and with no map to guide me. However, there is one general location talked about in the Bible as being able to sustain many people and their flocks. That land is called Midian. The main wadi or ancient river-bed in Midian extends from Al-Bed to the Red Sea proper. This was what the Hiltons (1976) identified as the River Laman. Whether this is what the author Hagoth intended here is still a guess.]

Continuing on:

The Nephites journeyed in the most fertile parts of the desert for the reason that it was there they found water and [food]. We are told that game is still abundant around these wadis, or fertile spots, where they collect to find food, water and shelter from the burning heat of a tropical sun.

The Prophet Joseph tells us that after reaching the 19^o north latitude Lehi's company turned eastward and crossed Arabia to the Indian Ocean. It would have been almost an impossibility to have crossed north of this point, as the whole of central Arabia presents a barren, uninhabitable desert without water or vegetation. A crossing even at this point named is very difficult, and long marches are to be made without water. Nephi tells us that they suffered much from hunger, thirst and fatigue, which would be a natural outcome of such a journey at the present time.

Nephi describes the country where they reached the sea as a very rich and productive region, a land abounding in fruits, honey and game in abundance, for this reason they named it Bountiful.

This region to-day is rich in almost everything that could gladden the heart of man. Fruits of almost every variety grow profusely. Wild honey is plentiful. Fish are so numerous on the coast that they are caught by the cart loads and used to enrich the soil. It is known everywhere as the Frankincense Country, and is truly a bountiful land.

[Note* This part of Arabia was known from ancient times as Arabia Felix or Happy Arabia due to the fertile land. Unlike future authors who seemed to feel that Arabia was unknown to the modern world, the author Hagoth understood this part of Arabia.]

The article continues:

There Nephi, in obedience to divine command, built a ship and set sail for the promised land.

By a glance at the map it will be seen that at certain seasons the sea currents would favor their voyage almost the entire distance, and that the place of landing on the coast of Chili, South America, is at that point where the great Antarctic current first sets in close to shore.

The Arabian coast current commences its westward flow in April of each year. Had Nephi set sail at that time and occupied six months in the voyage, he would have arrived in the promised land in the spring of the year in that latitude.

After they had set sail, we are told they were driven forth before the wind towards the promised land. This, no doubt, has reference to the periodical winds which blow at stated times in those regions. these winds have from the earliest times attracted the attention of navigators, for by taking advantage

of their regular blowing an easy and speedy voyage may be calculated upon with certainty, while by opposing their force the voyage is rendered difficult, slow and uncertain. In crossing from the north to the south temperate zones adverse winds and calms would be encountered, reference to which has been made by Nephi in his record. (Book of Mormon, page 46)

(p. 307)

[Note* These are the most details that any LDS author to this date has given regarding Lehi's voyage route to the New World.]

Nephi's Flight into the Wilderness-- The Prophet Joseph located the landing of Lehi's company at the 30o south latitude, on the coast of Chili. Examining the map of that country we find a point of land extending out to sea, there, just north of which is a bay known as Coquimbo. As this is the only sheltered spot from some distance up or down the coast, we conclude that this was the place of landing. . . . (p. 323)

[Note* This is the first time that the "bay known as Coquimbo" has been associated with Lehi's landing spot. However, the above statement seems self-explanatory when a map (see below) is consulted. Coquimbo is situated almost exactly 30o south latitude. So this bit of information came about simply by the author consulting a map, finding 30o south latitude, and then extracting the name on the coast closest to that location. Coquimbo is somewhat north of Valparaiso, Chile, (at 33o south latitude) which had previously been associated by LDS authors with Lehi's landing site.

It is interesting to note that G. F. Weston would also list "Coquimbo" as the site where Lehi landed on his map drawn for the 1894 RLDS Committee on American Archaeology and inserted into their 1898 publication. (see the 1898 notation and map) Additionally, on a 1979 trip to Bolivia and a visit to the ruins of Tihuanco, Spencer W. Kimball either said or was interpreted to say that Lehi and his family landed in Coquimbo, Chile (see the 1979 notation).]

Question: Who is "Hagoth"?

[1888 Map: Location of Coquimbo, Chile. "South America" map, Rand McNally and Company, 1902. BYU Library, Call # G 5200 1902 .R3]

[1888^ Lyman O. Littlefield](#)

"Reminiscences of Latter-day Saints," p. 16, October 1888

Lyman Littlefield writes:

This Book of Mormon is a translation from gold plates upon which was kept the record or history of the once enlightened and powerful Nephite nation, which sprang from the family of Lehi, who left Jerusalem by command of God 600 years before Christ, which company landed on the coast of Chili, in South America, and after becoming numerous there, many thousands of them came to North America, where they were greatly blessed of the Lord as long as they kept his commandments. . . .

Source: ^Typed copy received from Dennis C. Davis, from notes in his possession.

[1889^ John H. Kelson](#)

"Unwitting Witnesses," in Deseret Weekly 38, January 5, 12, 19, 26 1889; February 2, 23 1889; March 16, 23, 30 1889; May 4, 1889: pp. 33-35, 66-68, 102-104, 134-135, 169-170, 198-200 257-259, 355-357, 391-393, 421-423, 577-580.

In this series of articles, John Kelson defends the Book of Mormon from the negative perspectives of science-- evolution, philology, anthropology, archaeology, etc. In the process he makes statements concerning the geography of the Book of Mormon, quoting from Orson Pratt's footnotes and also The Compendium regarding Lehi's travels. He writes the following:

[p. 198] According to the Book of Mormon the second race of people who settled upon the land of America were called Nephites. They left the city of Jerusalem B.C. 599, being the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Israel. . . .

The course they took was "nearly a south, southeast direction until they came to the 19th degree north latitude; then, nearly east of [to] the Sea of Arabia; then they sailed in a southeast direction, and landed on the continent of America, in Chili, thirty degrees south latitude." See Compendium, page 289.

. . .

[1889^ H. A. Stebbins](#) (RLDS)

"The Story of the Book of Mormon." Autumn Leaves, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Jan) pp. 14-18

[p. 17] (Chapter 10-The Book of Mosiah) In writing about the story of Zeniff, King Limhi and Ammon coming from the land of Zarahemla, Stebbins notes:

In writing concerning Peru, the land of the Nephites and the Lamanites, it is well to bear in mind that ancient Peru contained within its limits all that region which is now included in several other kingdoms. Baldwin mentions on page 237 of his book that the Peru of the Incas took in the territory now known as "Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chili as far down as the thirty-seventh degree of south latitude." He writes that the remains of the ancient people "are found to some extent in all these countries, although most abundantly in Peru," that is in the portion of that vast territory which is now known as Peru.

Note* If this geographical information on Peru was known and adopted by early LDS or RLDS writers, then any mention by Stebbins or other writers of Lehi landing in "Peru" might have to be expanded to include the present-day boundaries of Ecuador, Bolivia and Chili "as far down as the thirty-seventh degree of south latitude."

1889^ B. H. Roberts

Moroni, A Sketch of the Nephite Republic," in The Contributor Vol. 11, Junius F. Wells, ed. Published by the Contributor Company. Salt Lake City, Utah: Printed by the Deseret News Company, 1890. No. 1, November, 1889, pp.15-18; No. 2, December, 1889, pp. 54-58; No. 3, January, 1890, pp. 81-85; No. 4, February, 1890, pp. 131-136; No. 5, March, 1890, pp. 164-168; No. 6, April, 1890, pp. 227-231; No. 7, May, 1890, pp. 262-266; No. 8, June, 1890, pp. 293-296; No. 9, July, 1890, pp. 335-340; No. 10, August, 1890, pp. 385-388; No. 12, October, 1890, p. 449.

Roberts's comments on Book of Mormon geography seem to partially follow those footnoted by Orson Pratt in the 1879 Book of Mormon. He writes as follows:

[p. 54] Of the migration of Lehi's colony from Jerusalem to America . . . I need not speak. It will be sufficient, for my purpose, to refer to that division in the colony, which resulted in two distinct peoples being established in America. . . .

What proportion of the colony consented to follow [Nephi] cannot be determined. . . .The company was, doubtless, considerable.

The direction taken was northward: for it is known that Lehi's colony landed on the west coast of South America, thirty degrees south latitude; and the remains of the great Nephite civilization are to be found north of that point, as also the great cities spoken of in the Book of Mormon. . . .

[pp. 167-168] I take it for granted that the reader remembers Lehi's colony landed on the west coast of South America, in Chili.

[1890^](#) [George Q. Cannon](#)

"Editorial Thoughts: The Book of Mormon Geography, in *The Juvenile Instructor*, January 1, 1890, pp. 18-19. Reprinted in *The Instructor* 73, 4 (April, 1938), pp. 159-160.

There is a tendency, strongly manifested at the present time among some of the brethren, to study the geography of the Book of Mormon. We have heard of numerous lectures, illustrated by suggestive maps, being delivered on this subject during the present winter, generally under the auspices of the Improvement Societies and Sunday Schools. We are greatly pleased to notice the increasing interest taken by the Saints in this holy book . . .

It also unravels many mysteries connected with the history of the ancient world, more particularly of this western continent . . .

We have been led to these thoughts from the fact that the brethren who lecture on the lands of the Nephites of the geography of the Book of Mormon are not united in their conclusions. No two of them, so far as we have learned, are agreed on all points, and in many cases the variations amount to thousands of miles. These differences of views lead to discussion, contention, and perplexity, and we believe more confusion is caused by these divergences than good is done by the truths elicited.

How is it that there is such a variety of ideas on this subject? Simply because the Book of Mormon is not a geographical primer. It was not written to teach geographical truths. What is told us of the situation of the various lands or cities of the ancient Jaredites, Nephites, and Lamanites, is usually simply an incidental remark connected with the doctrinal or historical portions of the work; and almost invariably only extends to a statement of the relative position of some land or city contiguous to or surrounding places, and nowhere gives us the exact situation or boundaries so that it can be definitely located without fear of error. . . .

The First Presidency have often been asked to prepare some suggestive map illustrative of Nephite geography, but have never consented to do so. Nor are we acquainted with any of the Twelve Apostles who would undertake such a task. The reason is, that without further information they are not prepared even to suggest. The word of the Lord or the translation of other ancient records is required to clear up many points now so obscure that, as we have said, no two original investigators agree with regard to them. When, as is the case, one student places a certain city at the Isthmus of Panama a second in Venezuela, and a third in Guiana or northern Brazil, it is obvious that suggestive maps prepared by these brethren would confuse instead of enlighten; and they cannot be thus far apart on this one important point without relative positions being also widely separate.

For these reasons we have strong objections to the introduction of maps and their circulation among our people which profess to give the location of the Nephite cities and settlements. As we have said, they have a tendency to mislead, instead of enlighten, and they give rise to discussions which will lead to division of sentiment and be very unprofitable. We see no necessity for maps of this character, because, at least, much would be left to the imagination of those who prepare them; and we hope that there will be no attempt made to introduce them or give them general circulation. Of course, there can be no harm result from the study of the geography of this continent at the time it was settled by the Nephites, drawing all the information possible from the record which has been translated for our benefit. But beyond this we do not think it necessary, at the present time, to go, because it is plain to be seen, we think, that evils may result therefrom.

Note* Cannon here denounces the varying details in Book of Mormon maps and the contention that arises from such differences. He says that "The First Presidency have often been asked to prepare some suggestive map illustrative of Nephite geography, but have never consented to do so. Nor are we acquainted with any of the Twelve Apostles who would undertake such a task." Yet previously in 1887, he seemed to have no trouble announcing "a few points which can be identified. One of those points was that "the landing place of Lehi and his family was near what is now known as the city of Valparaiso, in the Republic of Chili." (See the 1887 Cannon notation)

[1891^ John H. Kelson](#)

"Wars of the Nephites and Lamanites," in *The Deseret Weekly*, vol. 43 no. 17, Salt Lake City: The Deseret News Co., October 17, 1891, p. 521

The colony of Lehi landed in Chile, on the west coast of South America, about 600 years before Christ. There is no name recorded of the locality of the first settlement, but it is thus described by the great leader, Nephi . . . [he then quotes 1 Nephi 18:25]

[1891^ George Reynolds](#)

The Dictionary of the Book of Mormon, SLC: J. H. Parry, 1891. Reprinted in 1910, 1929, 1954.

In George Reynolds' Dictionary of the Book of Mormon (1891) the following excerpts relate to Lehi's travels:

LEHI . . . 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.

LEMUEL, VALLEY OF After three days' journey through the desert bordering the upper waters of the Red Sea (Gulf of Arabia) Lehi and his colony reached a small valley wherein they camped and built an altar to the Lord. . . . After a stay of considerable length, Lehi continued his journey down the shores of the Red Sea.

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

BOUNTIFUL, LAND OF (In Arabia) . . . It was a portion of Arabia Felix, or Arabia the happy, so called in contradistinction to Arabia the stony, and Arabia the desert, on account of its abundant productiveness and great fertility. It was in this blessed region, on the shore of the Arabian sea, that Nephi built the ship that carried Lehi's colony to the promised land. . . .

Note* The following perspectives can be deduced from the comments above:

1. Lehi traveled down the shores of the Red Sea.
2. They were careful not to be seen by anyone.
3. They turned east on the nineteenth parallel and traveled across the barren desert to the eastern shores (the Gulf of Oman or Arabian Sea).
4. Nephi built and sailed the boat (no mention is made of any outside help)
5. They landed at Valparaiso, Chili.

Note* See the notation for 1957 (Compendium), where much of the information above has been edited out by Phillip Reynolds..

[1893-4^](#) [H. E. Baker](#)

"Ancient Arizona and the Book of Mormon," in *The Contributor*, vol. 15 (1893-94). Published by The Contributor Company, Salt Lake City, Utah. Printed by the Deseret News Publishing Company, 1894.

In this four-part article in *The Contributor*, a periodical "representing the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Associations of the Latter-day Saints," H. E. Baker examines the Zuni Indians of Arizona and shows why they could be descended from the Nephites. On page 217 he writes:

This much we know; these people of whom we now write are either the descendants of those who came from Babel about one hundred and twenty-five years after the flood, called Jaredites, a period so early that it precludes the possibility of any developed civilization occupying America between that event and the flood, or they are the posterity of those who left Jerusalem about one thousand and seven hundred and forty years after the flood, and landed at the thirtieth parallel of south latitude on the western coast of South America.

[1894](#) [Henry A. Stebbins](#)

Book of Mormon Lectures, Independence, MO: Ensign House, 1901.

These Book of Mormon Lectures were delivered on nine successive evenings during February, 1894. They would be revised, corrected and published in 1901 (see the notation). They support a Hemispheric model for Book of Mormon geography.

[1894^](#) [J. V. Bluth](#)

"More Book of Mormon Evidence," in Millennial Star 56, October 8, 1894, pp. 648-650.

J. V. Bluth smiles in amusement as archaeologists search for the answers to the origin of the early inhabitants of America while all the time ignoring the entire history of America's ancient inhabitants as contained in the Book of Mormon. He writes: Let us look at it from another point of view. The sword recently discovered, even if the inscriptions upon it be read aright, can indicate only in an indefinite way the origin of the people once occupying America. It can not give their history in any degree whatever. In fact it will only intensify the mystery insasmuch as it will destroy former theories of the origin of the Indians. The Book of Mormon however, tells us all that can be desired. It gives the names of the two families that left Jerusalem 600 years before Christ and were miraculously guided to the western coast of South America, where they took up their abode. They were of Israelitish descent . . .

[1894](#)

RLDS Committee on American Archaeology formed to prepare Book of Mormon map

Glenn A. Scott writes the following:

At the RLDS General Conference of 1894, a Committee on Archaeology was appointed to outline and prepare a map of Book of Mormon history. It included such distinguished members as W. H. Kelley, F. M. Sheehy, S. A. Burgess, R. Etzenhauser, Louis Sheldon, and William Woodhead.

[1894^](#) [J. R. Lambert](#)

(RLDS)

Objections to the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants Answered and Refuted, Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House, 1894, pp. 36-39.

Journey to the Red Sea

Next, we are gravely told that in three days Lehi and his family traveled from Jerusalem to the Red Sea. "It would," it is said, "require nearly three weeks." . . . Let the Book of Mormon speak for itself. On pages 3 and 4, paragraphs 13, 14, we read:

And it came to pass that he departed into the wilderness. And he left his house . . . And it came to pass that when he had traveled three days in the wilderness, he pitched his tent in a valley by the side of a river of water . . .

One very simple thing is always necessary in the examination of historical statements; viz., to bear in mind that the history was written after the events occurred, and the events are not always recorded in the order in which they occurred. This, as every good critic knows, is frequently the case in the Bible history, and it has been made the occasion of severe criticism by its opponents. However, in the above account there is nothing difficult.

The plain statements are these: They traveled three days in the wilderness, when Lehi pitched his tent in a valley which was by the side of a river, which river emptied into the Red Sea. How far it was from Jerusalem to the wilderness is not stated, nor do our critics inform us. how far the place of encampment was from the Red Sea is not stated, but "the valley," in which they encamped, "was in the borders near the mouth thereof"--the mouth of the river. If it be said, "We have no account of any distance being traveled by them before the three days' journey," we reply, neither have we any account of their encampment for the night before the one which occurred at the end of the three days' travel in the wilderness; and if this was the first, then it is probable that they traveled at nights as well as in the daytime. However, as it is in Bible history, so it is in the Book of Mormon, many things occurred which were not recorded. It is not at all probable that they stepped right out of the capital city into the wilderness.

The Red Sea has two large arms, one of which we now call the Gulf of Suez, the other, the Gulf of Akabah. The latter extends towards Jerusalem, and is about one hundred miles long. The Hebrews called any large body of water a sea, lake or pool. The Gulf of Suez is frequently referred to as the Red Sea, in the Bible, because it is a part of it. The Gulf of Akabah is also a part of it, and when they came to this gulf, if this was the course of their travel, they came to the Red Sea. It is not over one hundred and sixty miles from Jerusalem to the Gulf of Akabah, and but little more than this to the Gulf of Suez. We will suppose that they traveled twenty-five miles before striking the wilderness, and that they were twenty-five miles from the mouth of the gulf when they encamped. This would leave one hundred and ten miles to be traveled over in three days; i.e., thirty-seven and two thirds miles per day. All this is within the statements of the record, and furnishes no proper data upon which to reject its statements. We have

reason to believe that the people were strong, they were lightly laden, and fleeing before their enemies. More than this, God had commanded them to go and they had just claim upon him for all needed strength. . . .

[1898^](#)

(RLDS)

"Study Course: Landing and First Settlements of the Nephites," in Autumn Leaves, Vol. 11, No. 7 (July), pp. 310-317.

[pp. 310-311] . . . it is interesting to note that while compasses were not generally known to the world at that early period [Lehi's time], they were not entirely unknown, either. That hundreds of years before the Christian era, the compass was used by the Chinese in making long journeys by land. Article "Compass," in Chambers' Encyclopedia, says, "It appears, . . . on very good authority, that it was known in China and throughout the East, generally, at a very remote period." . . .

Take a map of Asia, and trace the course of the party's journeying, and it will bring you to the southeastern shore of Arabia on the gulf of Oman, just where our archaeological committee locate the land Bountiful on their map. If you will only refer to your common school geographies, in the description of Arabia, you will find that it is mostly a sandy, rocky plateau, the climate being dry and hot, but that in Oman--here we locate Bountiful-- "the climate is more moist, and cocoanuts, dates, mangoes, coffee, sugar cane, cotton, etc., are cultivated." This, you see, agrees with Nephi's description.

Here, at land Bountiful, they build a ship according to the Lord's command, and embark for the promised land.

It is believed the Nephites landed on the western coast of South America. Why is it so believed? [NOTE THE RLDS PERSPECTIVE BELOW]:

[First] Because the Book of Mormon's own accounts, further on, make that point clear. for one reference in proof, turn to Alma 13:60-67; c. e. v. 11.

[Second] Speaking of the origin of the people whom the discoverers found in Mexico and Central America, Baldwin says the most satisfactory conclusion is that they came from the south; that they seem closely related, in their civilized life, to the ancient South Americans. The Professor says: "I find myself more and more inclined to the opinion that the aboriginal South Americans are the oldest people on this continent."--Ancient America, p. 185.

As Elder Stebbins remarks in his "Story of the Book of Mormon," this could have no reference to the Jaredites, for they were entirely extinct when the Nephites came, and only the crumbling traces of some of their towns and cities remained.

Third, the ruins in South America bear evidence of greater antiquity, and especially in some of the regions of Peru. Cities were builded upon the ruins of cities; and that there existed nations before the

Incarial period that had a "civilization, a language, a religion different," from "the Incas who succeeded them and overran their territories," "is clearly attested by the architectural remains, sculptures, carvings, etc., which they have left behind them," says Chambers' Encyclopedia, under "Ancient Civilization and History," article "Peru."

Also, the same source says, "On the shores of Lake Titicaca" are "fragments of buildings" that "were beheld with astonishment by the earliest of the Incas." "Twenty-five miles south of Lima," the capital of Peru, there stands "the remains of a now wholly deserted city, and of a great temple." The religion seems to have been a pure worship of God, the account says.

As we pursue our study, we shall see how the results of modern research and discovery harmonizes with the history of the Book of Mormon. . . .

[p. 312] Tradition also adds evidence to the conclusion that the Nephites landed in South America. Baldwin says, "According to the old traditions of both Mexico and Peru, the Pacific coast in both countries was anciently visited by a foreign people who came in ships."--Ancient America, p. 170.

As the committee reminds us, we have also to consider that the productivity of the region where the colony landed, the healthfulness of the climate would be essentially important in order to sustain their growth and development. It must be rich in its productions of fruit, grains, vegetables. "There must be an abundance of animals, . . . adapted to the use of man; there must be minerals of every kind, . . . and of easy access." The place must be all this to answer the description given in 1 Nephi 5:128-130, 132; c. e. v. 46, for it says the seeds they planted "did grow exceedingly; wherefore, we were blessed in abundance." It speaks of finding beasts of every description; and all manner of ore, and that they made plates.

"South America," the committee's report says, "Answers, in every respect, to the demands of the described conditions." . . .

The Northern part of Chili is rainless and barren, hence it is believed the Nephites landed in the vicinity of the thirtieth degree, south latitude, in the fertile region above-described. The exact point of their first settlement, just how far from the sea is not known, and it is immaterial so long as the vicinity is established. They did not stay in the first place long, however, it appears, but journeyed into the wilderness, probably to explore the country with the view of seeing if they could "better their condition." Then Lehi died (2 Nephi 3:13,14; c.e.v. 4) . . .

[1898 Map: Map of the World Showing Probable Course of the Ancient Colonies across the Ocean. Drawn for the Archaeological Com. by G. F. Weston. Buchanan, Mich. "Study Course: Landing and First Settlements of the Nephites," in Autumn Leaves, Vol. 11, No. 7 (July 1898), p. 313.]

[1898 Map: Map of the Southern Portion of Land Nephi. Drawn for the Archaeological Com. by G. F. Weston. Buchanan, Mich. "Study Course: Landing and First Settlements of the Nephites," in Autumn Leaves, Vol. 11, No. 7 (July 1898), p. 314.]

[1898^](#)

(RLDS)

"Is America the Land of the Book of Mormon, or is the Book of Mormon True, and a Record of America?" in Autumn Leaves, Vol. 11, No. 9 (Sept), pp. 406-410

[p. 406] Having found where the evidences place the beginning of the ancient civilization of South America, or the beginning of the Nephite settlements, we trace the course of the nation northward, according to the record, and archaeology bears witness as follows. On page 222 of "Ancient America," we are told that "the ruins of ancient Peru [remember that ancient Peru comprised the states now known as "Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chili as far down as the thirty-seventh degree of south latitude."- Ancient America, p. 237] are found chiefly on the elevated table-lands of the Andes. . . . The great district to which they belong extends north and south about two thousand miles." . . .

[p. 407] Perhaps it should be noted here that the committee are not certain that the Nephites landed as far south on the coast of Chili as the thirtieth parallel of latitude. You will readily understand, after the lapse of centuries and the destruction wrought by time's defacing work, the difficulties in the way of ascertaining localities exactly. However gratifying it might be to us if this could be done, we have no need to regret, so far as our proof is concerned, that it cannot be. If we can find that there are unmistakable evidences of such a people having lived on this land as the Book of Mormon describes; that they led such a life and had such a civilization, and can place that civilization as to region and general outline, this is enough to sustain the claims of the book archaeologically. And can this be done? Has it been done? Most assuredly!

[1898](#)

RLDS

A Report of the Committee on American Archaeology, 1898

Glenn A. Scott writes:

After much time and labor, members of the RLDS Committee on Archaeology reached conclusions which they considered to be substantially correct. From these conclusions, G. F. Weston of Buchanan,

Michigan prepared six maps of Book of Mormon lands for the committee. A Report of the Committee on American Archaeology which included the maps was published in 1898 with a second printing in 1902, and revised and published again in 1910. Although the church never officially endorsed the maps, the proposed geographical locations of Book of Mormon cities and lands on the maps made a lasting impression which has been difficult to correct.

Unfortunately, the committee made the easy assumption that the Isthmus of Panama was the "narrow neck of land" so frequently referred to throughout the Book of Mormon. This critical decision inevitably led to the conclusion that Lehi and his colony had to have landed in South America, because the book's narrative makes it very clear that the lands of Nephi and Zarahemla were south of the "narrow neck." This assumption was widely accepted, perhaps in part because of the legends and ruins of the Inca and pre-Inca people in South America.

The committee equated the City of Nephi with Cuzco, Peru, and another city, identified as the city of Lehi-nephi, is shown as a separate entity more than 500 miles northwest of the City of Nephi.

Source: ^Glenn A. Scott, "Locating the Land and City of Nephi," in *The Witness*, Winter 1991, no. 75, pp. 6-7.

[1898 Map: The 1894 Committee Map assuming that Lehi landed in South America. Drawn by G. F. Weston]

Note* While the Committee report detailed below says only that Lehi landed "upon the west shore of South America, on the coast of Chile, not far from the thirtieth degree, south latitude," the map drawn by G. F. Weston has Lehi landing at "Coquimbo." (which is located at 30 degrees south latitude--see above) It is interesting that no authoritative quotes from any of the early brethren or mention of the Lehi's Travels statement were given here as a basis for Lehi's landing site. Furthermore, although Orson Pratt would repeatedly associate the name "Valparaiso" with Lehi's landing site, the name Valparaiso does not appear on the RLDS map.

The Report reads as follows:

Part 1

The Nephites

(p. 8) To begin with, the origin of the Nephites as a separate people began at Jerusalem. . . By commandment they left Jerusalem and "came down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea," and "traveled in the wilderness in the borders which are nearer the Red Sea." . . . [what follows is a chronology of scriptural quotes relative to Lehi's journey through the wilderness to the land Bountiful]

(p. 10) By consulting a map of Asia, and noting the direction traveled by the company, as cited above, it will be observed at once that "Bountiful" could not have been elsewhere than on the southeastern shore of Arabia, on the Gulf of Oman. (See map) The Red Sea lies in a south, southeast direction, hence they followed closely along its borders for a long distance, and then moved nearly eastward from that time forth. This direction would keep them south of the Persian Gulf, and there was no chance of passing to the north of it. That point seems clear. . . .

(p. 11) Now a leading point to be determined is as to where this landing was effected, according to our modern maps. We have decided that it was upon the west shore of South America, on the coast of Chile, not far from the thirtieth degree, south latitude. (See map.)

Should it be asked as to the ground upon which this conclusion is reached and others further on, the answer is that it is from the aggregation of facts, as noted in the "abridged" history of the people written by themselves: Compared with the geographical, hydrographical, and topographical outlines of the country as it now appears; the revealments of the archaeologists of modern times, the class of people and their manner of life found there; distances traveled over from place to place, as set out in the record; course of travel, varied kinds of animals found, climate, mineral wealth, natural boundaries, fruitfulness of the soil, the latitude and longitude in which the leading transactions of the great nation occurred; the great forests, etc. These points and their relationship one to the other will be developed further on, so that the facts elicited will be both interesting and convincing as the history and map are followed. . . .

(p. 12) It will be noted that where this young colony landed there must be soil that is fruitful in production; that will grow pretty much every variety of cereals, vegetables, fruits, etc. at least that were known and in use for food at that time. They planted seeds of every kind, and they produced in abundance. The climate had to be most excellent, at least adapted to these conditions. There must be an abundance of animals, roaming in nature's vast forest, adapted to the use of man; there must be minerals of every kind--"all manner of ore," gold, silver, copper, etc., and it must be of easy access; it must be a place adapted to the growth and development of human life, physically and mentally. There must be a vast territory to open up and occupy. Were this not so, the critics of the Book of Mormon could easily find a vulnerable place at which to attack it. South America answers, in every respect, to the demands of the described conditions. It embraces thousands of miles of territory, and every variety of climate known is to be found there.

Beginning on page 91 we find the following Summary of the Committee's findings concerning geography:

In conclusion, the committee is aware that it has not produced a perfect map. It is reasonably certain, however, that the general outlines are correct, and that no future inquiry will be able to move them:

1. That the Nephites, after leaving Jerusalem, passed down along the eastern coast of the Red Sea, until near the Tropic of Cancer [approx. 23.50 degrees north latitude], and then crossed Arabia to the east, and landed in the country now known as Oman, on the Gulf of Oman, from which point they crossed the ocean, probably by going eastward."

[Note* There are no modern roads leading eastward exactly along the Tropic of Cancer. However, if one turns eastward "near" or just north of the Tropic of Cancer there is a road that travels eastward through the city of Medina and eastward through the city of Riyadh until it reaches the coast near modern-day country of Qatar on the Arabian Gulf. The road then runs eastward along the coast through the present-day United Arab Emirates until it reaches the coast of the Gulf of Oman and arrives in the coastal shipping port-city of Muscat in Oman. (see maps below)]

[1898 Map #1: Tropic of Cancer Route from the West Coast of Arabia to the East Coast of Oman. Geoprojects 1980. The Oxford Map of Arabia. Great Britain: Cook, Hammond & Kell, Mitcham, Surrey, 1980]

[1898 Map #2: Tropic of Cancer Route from the West Coast of Arabia to the East Coast of Oman. Geoprojects 1980. The Oxford Map of Arabia. Great Britain: Cook, Hammond & Kell, Mitcham, Surrey, 1980]

[1898 Map #3: Tropic of Cancer Route from the West Coast of Arabia to the East Coast of Oman. Geoprojects 1980. The Oxford Map of Arabia. Great Britain: Cook, Hammond & Kell, Mitcham, Surrey, 1980]

2. That they landed upon the west coast of South America on the coast of Chili.

Interestingly, on pages 92-93 of the Summary, Number 16 on the list reads as follows:

16. While the committee is not so certain as to the exact locations of the cities of Lehi-Nephi, Middoni, Ishmael, Midian, Mormon, Jerusalem, etc.; yet they must have been somewhere in the regions of country as marked on the map. Neither are we certain that the Nephites landed as far south on the coast of Chili as the thirtieth parallel of latitude. It is known that great physical changes have taken place

in the contour of Chili in the past, and even quite recently, the whole land to the north having been elevated by the influence of earthquakes; and at the time of the landing of the Nephites the country may have been much different in part to what it is now; and that there was an inviting landing place favorable for settlement five or six degrees to the north of the thirtieth parallel, just south of the desert of Atacama, and that the landing place was there. If this be true, it will not affect in the least other parts of the map as given. It would only shorten the distance traveled by Nephi and companions, when they separated from their brethren and entered the wilderness and made their way to Nephi, and founded that city. The same conditions of country in the Argentine Republic would obtain.

Note* Going north of the thirtieth parallel "five or six degrees" would bring us to Moreno Bay and the port city of Antofagasta, Chile [see map below], located on the same latitude as the Tropic of Capricorn (at about twenty-four degrees south latitude). Just north of this we find Mejillones Bay and at about 22.5 degrees south latitude we come to the port city of Cobija.

[1898 Map: Location of Antofagasta, Chile. "South America" map, Rand McNally and Company, 1902. BYU Library, Call # G 5200 1902 .R3]

[1898 Illustrated Map: Map of the Eastern and Western Continents. Showing Ocean Currents and General View of the Ancient Lands. Drawn by G. F. Weston. RLDS, Report of Committee on American Archaeology , Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing Co: 1898.]

[1898 Illustrated Map: Map of the World. Showing Probable Course of the Ancient Colonies Across the Ocean. Drawn by G. F. Weston. RLDS, Report of Committee on American Archaeology , Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing Co: 1898.]

Note* See the notation for 1910; see the maps for the 1884 and the 1888 notations.

[1899^ Louise Palfrey](#) (RLDS)
"Study Corner," in "The Religio's Arena," in Autumn Leaves," Vol. 12, No. 5 (May), pp. 221-224

Teachers were encouraged to use the approved maps to illustrate their lessons.

[p. 224] Map talk: Trace the journeying of Lehi's party from Jerusalem to the place they now reach, the land Bountiful. Defend your points as you go along.

[1899^](#) [James E. Talmage](#)

The Book of Mormon, an Account of its Origin, with Evidences of its Genuineness and Authenticity (A Pamphlet of two lectures) 1899, pp. 9-10

Lehi's voyage was across the "South Pacific Ocean to the western coast of South America, whereon they landed. . . . They spread northward, occupying the northern part of South America . . .

[1899^](#) [James E. Talmage](#)

The Articles of Faith, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1899, p. 265. Reprinted and revised in more than 42 editions up to the present.

Articles of Faith is considered one of the classics in Latter-day Saint literature. It is the outgrowth of a series of lectures in theology given by Dr. James E. Talmage, commencing in October of 1893. At that time Dr. Talmage was serving as the president of the LDS College in Salt Lake City. The First Presidency of the Church invited Dr. Talmage to prepare a text for use in Church schools and religion classes. The book was first published in 1899. It has since been published in thirteen foreign languages and been through more than fifty English editions. . . . On December 7, 1911, he was called as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, where he served faithfully until his death on July 27, 1933.

Concerning the migration of Lehi and his colony from Jerusalem, as found in the Book of Mormon, Dr. Talmage 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, whereon they landed (590 B.C.) probably somewhere near the site of the present city of Valparaiso in Chile.

Note* It is worth noting that editing on Talmage's words would take place in future editions. For example, note two examples below which have been marked to represent such changes.

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. whereon they landed (590 B.C.) probably somewhere near the site of the present city of Valparaiso in Chile.

Source: ^Missionary Reference Library: Articles of Faith, SLC: Deseret Book, 1990, Publisher's Preface and pp. 234-235.

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 South Pacific Ocean to the western coast of South America, whereon they landed about 590 B.C. The landing place is not described in the book itself with such detail as to warrant definite conclusions.

Source: ^James E. Talmage, Articles of Faith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981 [Gospelink]

Note* I have not yet done the research as to exactly when these editing changes first took place.

[1900^ William Woodhead](#) (RLDS)

"Myths of the New World--No. 1--12," in The Saints' Herald, 47, April 18, 25; May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; June 6, 13, 20, 27; July 4, 1900, pp. 259-260, 276-279, 286-288, 308-311, 319-321, 334-337, 352-353, 369-371, 383-385, 398-401, 416-418, 431-432.

Note* William Woodhead was a member of the RLDS Committee on American Archaeology which published its Report in 1898.

No. 1

The Book of Mormon narrative is plain and simple. . . . It makes two civilizations--two distinct races of men on this continent--which start to develop in two different parts of the country: the first on (as the writer understands it) commencing in Central America, reaching to the United States; the second one commencing in South America, south of the equator on the west coast, uniting later on with another related colony in the northern part of South American, the two becoming one. . . .

Note* The equator is, by definition, 30 degrees north of the traditional site in Chile where Lehi was supposed to have landed. This statement would imply that Lehi could have landed in Ecuador or Peru as well as in Chile.

No. 2 Origin of the Native Races.

. . . Clavigero supposes the Aztec tribes came originally from Asia across the Pacific (See Priest's Antiquities, p. 272.)

"Aztlan," the starting point of the ancestors of the Aztecs, has been looked for by most all the writers on Mexican antiquities. Brasseur de Bourbourg places it in California; Humboldt about 42o north latitude; Foster in New Mexico; Fontaine in the Mississippi valley; Bandelier in Florida; Boturini speaks of the gulf of California. (See Prehistoric America, pp. 284, 285, note 3)

It is argued by all, I believe, that in starting from Aztlan the original colony traveled southward; that is why they all locate it northward from Mexico

Again, we are told by those who have made this subject a study, that Aztlan, Huehue-Tlapallan, Tulan-Zuiva, and Amaquemecan are different names for the same place. (See Prehistoric America, p. 272, with Myths of the New World, pp. 104-106) Aztlan is the birthplace of the Aztecs, Tlapallan is the birthplace of the Quiches, Tulan is the birthplace of the Toltecs, and Amaquemecan is the birthplace of the Chichimecs. . . .

Now the reader can see at once that the Aztec colony that is said to have started from the "other side of the sea" looks just like the Lehi colony that started from Jerusalem (not counting Ishmael); namely, eight men with their wives. The first leader is Lehi and he has four sons. . . .

Now when the Aztec colony started from Aztlan they traveled southward. That is why Aztlan is looked for north of Mexico. So the Lehi colony traveled in the wilderness in a "south-southeast direction." (1 Nephi 5:6) Is that all accidental harmony? . . .

No. 12 Review

. . . A person who is called Quetzalcoatl came also from Tulan to preach to the Toltecs. There has been a great deal of speculation as to who this person could be. He was white, with a long beard, and dressed in a long white robe, his teachings are said to have been pure and elevating--"the purest Christianity." This person was high priest at Tulan (the distant Orient); he was born of a virgin "over there." He was crucified; was the creator. . . .

The myth of Quetzalcoatl will not fit any other person than our Lord, and it will just fit him. Tulan, then, is identified as the country where our Lord was born, thus confirming the Book of Mormon story of Christ's ministry to the Nephites, and that the ancestors of the natives came from Jerusalem.

[1900^](#) [George Reynolds](#)

Complete Concordance of the Book of Mormon, SLC: Deseret Book, 1900. Reprinted in 1957, 1968, 1973, 1976.

In 1900, George Reynolds finally published his Complete Concordance to the Book of Mormon, much of which (25,000 entries) had been completed while in prison in 1880. Until the age of computers, this monumental work would become the standard for students of the Book of Mormon. Added authoritative weight was given to this volume (and to his previous publications) due to the fact that on April 10, 1890, at the age of 48, George Reynolds would be set apart as one of the first seven presidents of the Seventy. The following entries are pertinent:

Bountiful--A portion of Arabia Felix, near the Arabian Sea [p. 100]

Irreantum-- The name given by Lehi's colony to an arm of the Indian Ocean on the eastern coast of Arabia. [p. 356]

Laman, River.-- A small Arabian river, (so named by Lehi) which emptied into the upper waters of the Red Sea. [p. 395]

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. [p. 416]

Note* The expanded material on Lehi's travels appearing in the 1891 Dictionary does not appear in the Concordance (probably because of space requirements). In 1957, the Concordance would be reprinted (edited and arranged by Philip C. Reynolds).

[1901 Henry A. Stebbins](#) (RLDS)

Book of Mormon Lectures, Lamoni, Iowa: Published by the Board of Publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1908, pp. 142-146.

Preface

This book is a revised and enlarged copy of the Book of Mormon Lectures that were delivered by the author in the Saints' chapel, Independence, Missouri, on nine successive evenings during February, 1894. They were given by the joint invitation of the Religio-Literary Society and the Sunday-school of that branch of the church. Sister Belle Robinson (now James) reported them in shorthand and their publication was immediately begun in Zion's Ensign. . . .

Since doing this the author has revised and corrected the original, and also added much more to the book from the great store of antiquarian and historical material that has been piling up during the past sixty years, especially the past thirty years, in favor of the book that has been advocated for more than seventy years as a book of divine truth. . . .

Henry A. Stebbins

Lamoni, Iowa, December 14, 1901.

On pages 142-146 we find the following:

The Book of Mormon states that Nephi was the man whom God appointed to have charge over that little colony in its journey, and to that box [the Liahona] he looked for guidance and instruction as they journeyed in the wilderness and across the great sea. . . .

This little colony traveled in a southeasterly direction, and are understood to have been in Arabia during the eight years until the time that they began to build a vessel in which to cross the Indian and Pacific Oceans. For we find no statement of their crossing any water until they crossed the great seas. . . .

[Nephi] says that he found materials and manufactured the tools to construct the ship according to the pattern that the Lord showed him. . . .

After the ship was made ready the colony put on board provisions, grain and seeds, and all other things necessary and essential for their voyage. Then they were driven across the waters by the wind

that God caused to blow upon them until they came to the west coast of South America, to the land that had been promised them as an inheritance. There are plenty of evidences in favor of just such an emigration in ships from Asia to America. Professor Baldwin says:

"According to the old traditions of both Mexico and Peru, the Pacific coast in both countries was anciently visited by a foreign people who came in ships."--Ancient America, p. 170

. . . According to present facts and past traditions, as found by the discoverers and explorers of this country, the ancient Americans had the art of sailing vessels; therefore it is not strange that we should read in the Book of Mormon that Nephi and his colony came over to American in vessels prepared and provided for that very purpose.

We understand from the history that they landed upon the west coast of Peru. We do not know exactly where, but in that region. In southern Peru is a lake called Titicaca, which is one hundred and fifteen miles long. There are islands in this lake, and some of the finest and choicest ruins of ancient America were found upon these islands. They consisted of cut stone laid in mortar, very finely built. From the description given in the Book of Mormon the Nephites must have landed somewhere in southern Peru, and from there they gradually journeyed north until they came into the United States of Colombia. . . .

Note* FIND a bibliography of the articles published in Zion's Ensign.

[1901 Illustration: Location of Lake Titicaca in the Country of Peru. Paul R. Cheesman, *Early America and the Book of Mormon: A Photographic Essay of Ancient America*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972, p. 68]

[1901 Illustration: Location of Peru in Relation to the Other Countries of South America. Paul R. Cheesman, *Early America and the Book of Mormon: A Photographic Essay of Ancient America*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972, p. 64.]

Note* Although the implication of Stebbin's statement is that he was probably referring to the boundaries of Peru and Colombia which existed in his time, it is worthy of note that ancient Peru was more extensive. It included within its boundaries parts of Bolivia, Chili and Argentina and the whole

country of Ecuador. Its territory was 400 miles in width and 3000 miles in length. It is also noteworthy that historians preceding the turn of the century were writing many things of ancient Peru which hinted at the Book of Mormon story. (See the 1910 Shook notation in geog1.sta)

[1901^](#) [James E. Talmage](#)

"The Story of Mormonism," in the Improvement Era, vol. 4, no. 8, June 1901, pp. 608-614.

The principal company was led by one Lehi, described as a personage of some importance and wealth . . . The book told of the journeyings [of Lehi's people] across the water, in vessels constructed according to revealed plan, of the people's landing on the western shores of South America near the spot now marked by the city of Valparaiso;

[1902^](#) [Julia N. Dutton](#) (RLDS)

"A Review of the Book of Mormon," in Autumn Leaves, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Feb), pp. 60-66.

By reading carefully the First and the Second Book of Nephi, we find that this company journeyed for eight years in the wilderness, first towards the Red Sea, thence in a southeast and easterly direction until they came to the Arabian Sea. Here they rested and built a boat according to directions given directly by God. . . .

This little colony crossed the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean, landing on the shores of South America, at about the thirtieth degree of south latitude, which would be in Chili.

[1902^](#) [RLDS](#)

Report of the Committee on American Archaeology, Lamoni, IA: Herald Publishing House, 1902.

This book is a reprint of the Report published in 1898. It contains maps and an outline of Book of Mormon history as prepared by the RLDS Committee on American Archaeology.

Note* See the notation for 1898 and 1910.

[1902^](#) [William H. Kelley](#) (RLDS)

Presidency and Priesthood, Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House and Bookbindery, 1902, pp. 253, 278.

On page 253 we find the following:

A second colony, called Nephites (of whom the "Book of Mormon" is mainly an abridged history), left Jerusalem under divine guidance, in the days of "Zedekiah, king of Judah," about six hundred years before Christ, and finally landed upon the west coast of South America, not far from the territory now known as Chile or Peru.

After a number of discussions about the prehistoric peoples of America, Kelley writes on page 278:

This further confirms the statements found in the "Book of Mormon," that the first settlements made upon this continent, in primeval times, were made in Central and South America, and that the migrations of the people were from south to north.

Bear in mind that Peru is the identical spot, or nearly so, affirmed by the "Book of Mormon" that the colony of Nephites landed that came out from Jerusalem six hundred years before the birth of the Saviour, and commenced to build a nation and people in South America.

[1903^](#) [Louise Palfrey](#) (RLDS)

"American Archaeology-No. 8-Origin of the Ancient Americans," in "The Religio's Arena," in Autumn Leaves, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Jan.), p. 43

The Book of Mormon says that the Jaredites, the Nephites, and the Zarahemlites came from the eastern part of the world, but taking different routes, they landed on opposite shores of the American Continent, the Jaredites on the east, or Atlantic Coast, the Nephites on the west, or Pacific Coast, while it is not so clearly indicated on which coast the Zarahemlites landed.

[1903^](#) [Louise Palfrey](#) (RLDS)

"The Religio's Arena," in Autumn Leaves, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Mar 1903), p. 131

[p. 131] We are indebted to Bro. G. F. Weston, of Buchanan, Michigan, for a copy of his "Detailed Map of Arabia," as it is called, "showing departure of Book of Mormon peoples." this map would have been very useful with the first quarter's lessons, and with the January and February lessons of the second quarter. It will add much interest to the closing lessons and the review of this quarter, however, and fix in our minds the route of the Nephite journey from Jerusalem across Arabia to the land Bountiful, where the party embarked for the promised land. . . . The map will be useful to refer to at any time in the future, and when we come to the Zarahemlites and the Jaredites.

[1903^](#) [Walter M. Wolfe](#)

"Modern Research and the Book of Mormon," in *Millennial Star* 65 (6 August 1903): pp. 501-3, 507-9.

The Book of Mormon gives an account of two distinct settlements of America by Asiatic peoples. The first followed the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel, and hence was contemporaneous with the development of the Euphrates and Nile valleys. Concerning the exact locality where this part, known as the Jaredites, landed, I know of no definite statement, but it is generally conceded to have been on the coast of North America; while the Nephites, more than fifteen hundred years later, landed on the west coast of South America. . . .

Concerning the history, religion and government of the first immigrants to the American continent, after the flood, the Book of Mormon is the only source of knowledge, and must so continue to be until a new Rosetta stone shall give the key to the hieroglyphics of the ancients. But with the Nephites and Lamanites, who reached the coast of South America about 600 B.C., the case is very different.

[1903^](#) [B. H. Roberts](#)

1903-1906 YMMIA Manual, *New Witnesses for God, Vol. II, (3 Volumes), Salt Lake City: General Board of the YMMIA, Deseret News Press, 1903. Copyright Joseph F. Smith, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Reprinted in 1920. 2nd edition in 1926, 1927, 1950.*

In volume II we find the following on pp. 577-578, after the Lehi's Travels statement had been quoted on p. 453:

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.

(See Sjordahl's 1927 notation and Roberts' 1928 notation)

[1904^](#) [Joel Ricks](#)

Brigham Young College, Bulletin: Society Report: Book of Mormon Geography, Logan: Brigham Young College, vol. III, No. 2, December 1904, pp. 1-19.

In a very detailed and textually referenced report on Book of Mormon Geography by the Brigham Young College Society of American Archeology at Logan, Joel Ricks, the Society Secretary and Chairman of the Book of Mormon Geography Committee laid out a specific hemispheric plan based on exploration of some of the areas involved and intensive study of the text itself. He writes:

To the President and Members of the Brigham Young College Society of American Archeology:

Your committee, to whom was assigned the subject of Book of Mormon Geography, respectfully submit the following report of their investigations, under the title of A Suggestive Study of Book of Mormon Geography.

In presenting this suggestive study, we do not claim that the locations we make, or the routes of travel we mark out, are positively correct. They are, however, the results of a careful, consistent study of the subject and the beginning of a movement that will, in time, accomplish the desired end. If we aid one student to a better understanding of the book, or invite criticisms that will throw further light upon this subject, we shall be satisfied.

On page 289 of the Compendium, we find the following in regard to the course taken by Lehi after leaving Jerusalem:--"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; thence sailing in a southeast direction, they landed on the continent of South America, in Chili, thirty degrees south latitude. This route would take them from Jerusalem down to the eastern arm of the Red Sea, known now as the Gulf of Akabah; thence to the Red Sea proper, and down its shores to the nineteenth degree of north latitude (1 Nephi 2:6); thence easterly (1 Nephi 17:1) across Arabia to the shores of the Arabian Sea."

As this region is identical with the description given by Nephi (1 Nephi 17:5) we believe most students will accept it as authentic. It gives us a definite point on the American continent to guide us in our study; vis., the point of landing.

[1904 Illustrated Model Joel Ricks HEMISPHERIC]

Lehi's Landing = Chile / L.S.=Western S. Amer. / N.N.=Pan. / L.N.=North of Panama / H.C.=N.Y.

Sources: Brigham Young College Society of American Archaeology. Society Report: Book of Mormon Geography. Brigham Young College Bulletin 3 (2) December 1904 (Logan, Utah). Ricks wrote this report as chairman of their Committee on Book of Mormon Geography; the two maps are specifically "by Joel Ricks." The model is essentially unchanged in Joel Ricks, *Helps to the Study of the Book of Mormon*, 1916. Also the same as in Ricks' *The Geography of the Book of Mormon*, n.p., (1939). See also Ricks' *Whence Came the Mayas?*, n.p., 1943.]

[1906^](#) [W. E. Peak](#) (RLDS)

"The Book of Mormon," in *Zion's Ensign*, vol. 17, no. 5, Thursday February 1, 1906, Independence, Missouri: Ensign Publishing House, p. 5

"Sermon by Elder W. E. Peak at Kansas City, Missouri, December 17, 1905, Reported by Mrs. H. B. Curtis"

The Book of Mormon gives us an account of another colony that was led from Jerusalem in the reign of Zedekiah about 600 B.C. . . . They began their settlement according to the Book of Mormon, in South America, on the western shore, . . .

Note* This was copied by me in longhand from the actual newspaper located in Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library.

[1906^](#) [S. W. L. Scott](#) (RLDS)

"Some Objections to the Book of Mormon: Considered in the Light of Historic and Scientific Facts," in *Saints Herald* 53 (18 April 1906): pp. 365-74.

S. W. L. Scott writes:

When Lehi and family journeyed from Jerusalem to the Indian Ocean through Arabia, it is urged that the Book of Mormon makes huge blunders in its record of the itinerary. Page 4, paragraph 14, states: "And it came to pass that when he had traveled three days in the wilderness, he pitched his tent in a valley by the side of a river of water. . . . he called the name of the river Laman, and it emptied into the Red Sea; and the valley was in the borders near the mouth thereof." The objector says: "There is no river emptying into the Red Sea from the eastern or Arabian side; Arabia being a desert, has no river system." While Arabia is a desert region, it has a large number of dried-up watercourses. Instead of a river system, there is a system of wadys--great receptacles for the water brought down by the mountains. There is a possibility that the rivers then running through the country may have sunken and disappeared by upheaval. The Bible Dictionary says: "The land at the head of the gulf has arisen. The sea has retired gradually since [that time]. The sea has receded many miles." Besides, hear what the encyclopedia says: "Of the rivers of Arabia, none are navigable; few are perennial or reach the sea. Some such, however, have been marked by the travelers, Wellsted and W. B. Harris. Glaser would identify the Wady Hund, first traced by Doughty, which traverses the Hijaz and flows into the Red Sea." Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 1, p. 132. The New International Encyclopedia says: "The Wady Rumen is the longest river, traversing under different names the entire country from west to east."--Volume 1., p. 691. This river is in the northern part of Arabia, and about three days' journey down the Arabian shore of the Red Sea.

[Note* At this time I am unable to locate either the Wady Hund or the Way Rumen.]

Again: In following "the directions of the ball," the family "came to a place which we called Bountiful because of its much fruit." (Book of Mormon, p. 26, pars. 17, 18) "There," says our opponents, "is a fatal account." Why is it fatal? "Because Arabia is a desert, a desolate, howling waste; nothing produced." Well, largely so; but what will you do with the following: "Arabia Felix' the southern coast, Hadramanta "here are found all the fruits of temperate and warm climates, among which the date, the fruit of the palm-tree, is the most common, and is, along with species of grain called dhourra, the staple article of food."--Encyclopedia Biblical Literature, vol. 1, p. 180. If the above is insufficient, what of the following: "Arabia Felix"--the most southern district of Arabia "was rich in gems and gold," (1 Kings 10:10; Ezekiel 27:22) "in spices and odoriferous shrubs and fragrant gums. Among the vegetable products are the manna of commerce, nutmegs, dates, cocoa, banana, sugar-cane, tamarind, coffee, melons, pumpkins, all of which are indigenous or have grown in the valleys from the earliest ages. With these grow lavender, wormwood, jasmine, and other scented plants, likewise the fig, vine, pomegranate, orange, lemon, quince, plantain, almond, apricot, acacia, castor-oil plant, senna, white lily, aloe, sessamum, all kinds of grain, tobacco, indigo, and different dye-herbs, with numerous sort of fruit and vegetables. to these may be added spicery, balm, myrrh, besides frankincense and many other aromatic gums."-- Imperial Bible Dictionary, vol. 1, p. 112, article, "Arabia." . . .

[Note* This author was the first to specifically detail the fertility of the southern end of the Arabian peninsula.]

Here, we are told, "are two fatal blunders." What are they? "There are neither 'ore' nor 'mountains' in southern Arabia." Now, let us see what standard authority has to say: "The elevation of the mountains in the extreme south of the peninsula is estimated at thirteen thousand feet."--New International Encyclopedia, vol. 1, p. 691. The Britannica says: "Some have been calculated to be five thousand feet in height, and trend from northwest to southeast."--Page 237. . . .

Now for the "ore": "The mountains consist of porphyry, jasper, quartz, sandstone, alabaster, basalt, marble, limestone. The minerals are . . . iron, lead, and copper. Mines of iron, lead, copper, and rock-salt, are still wrought." New American Encyclopedia, vol. 1, p. 738.

[1906^](#) [Joel Ricks](#)

"Chili and the Earthquakes," *Juvenile Instructor*, 41, no. 18, September 15, 1906, pp. 545-548

Joel Ricks writes:

To the Latter-day Saints the late earthquakes which have done so much damage in Valparaiso, Santiago and other cities and towns of Chili are of more than ordinary interest, for it was near Valparaiso that Lehi and his colony landed, and within its borders we have reason to believe was situated the original land of Nephi.

[1907^](#) [Fred B. Farr](#) (RLDS)

"The Two Sticks" in *Zion's Ensign*, vol. 18, no. 5, Thursday January 31, 1907, Independence Missouri, pp. 4-5

In this two-part article (January 24, 31, 1907) Elder Farr writes:

The translation was finished, printed, and we now have the book before us. And in it we read the history of ancient America, from its early settlement by a colony from the tower of Babel, who left at the confusion of languages, to the beginnings of the fifth century of the Christian era. By these records we

are informed that America, in ancient times, was inhabited by two distinct races of people. . . . The first, or more ancient race, came from the great tower and were called Jaredites. . . .

The second race which came directly from Jerusalem . . . were commanded to build ships, in which they were safely brought across the great Pacific, and landed upon the western coast of South America. . . .

Note* This was copied by me in longhand from the actual newspaper located in Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library.

[1907^ Louise Palfrey](#) (RLDS)

"The Archaeology of the Book of Mormon" in Autumn Leaves, Elbert A. Smith ed., Vol. 20, No. 4 (Apr), pp. 148-157

[p. 149] The Nephites, who succeeded the Jaredites, were a branch of the house of Israel whom the Lord led out of Jerusalem and directed to America about six hundred years before Christ. According to the Book of Mormon they landed in South America.

[1907^ Walter W. Smith](#) (RLDS)

"Normal Lessons on the Book of Mormon-Part 2" in "The Religio's Arena" in Autumn Leaves, Elbert A. Smith ed., Vol. 20, No. 9 (Sept), pp. 425-427

[p. 425] During this time [around 600 B.C.] two colonies of Israelites, one led by Lehi, the other led by Mulek, son of Zedekiah, left Jerusalem and emigrated to America, most likely by way of the Pacific Ocean, the former landing southward and the latter northward, from the "narrow neck of land,"--the Isthmus of Panama.

[1908^ Editor](#)

"Editorial Thoughts: The Ricks Map," Juvenile Instructor, Vol. XLIII, Salt Lake City, Utah, September 1, 1908, p. 355.

In the September 1, 1908 issue of *Juvenile Instructor* the following editorial is found. At the time we find "Joseph F. Smith, Editor; George Reynolds, J. M. Tanner, Assistant Editors."

The Ricks Map

Everyone who has ever taught Book of Mormon history has felt the need of a good suggestive map of Book of Mormon lands. For a long time, the making of such a map was discouraged. And since we have not had one such map, each teacher has made his own, and we have had a hundred.

Such a condition is almost worse than having no map at all. It leads to endless dispute; and it leaves the pupil with a far worse impression than one map alone, though wrong, or than no map whatever. We are very glad to note, therefore, that at last a Book of Mormon map may be had for use in all classes making a study of that sacred book. The map is prepared by Joel Ricks. Elder Ricks spent considerable time in South America for the sole purpose of locating Nephite historical points. The map is, therefore, prepared by one who has made a special study of Book of Mormon geography. And the map comes endorsed. That is, it is published with the approval and sanction of the presidency of the Church. Of course, the map is not correct in every detail. Indeed such a thing is impossible without special revelation. But this map of Bro. Ricks' is suggestive and helpful. We cannot see how the Book of Mormon can now be successfully [sic] studied without it.

Note* This statement is very important because it gives some perspective to the 1890 George Q. Cannon statement that distanced the Church from any map of Book of Mormon geography. Here we find that one of the reasons for that statement might have been that no scientific evidence or actual exploration was being put forth as evidence for the diversity of models proposed as of 1890. The above statement also gives some perspective to the 1918 statement of President Joseph F. Smith in which he mentions that the First Presidency has never officially sanctioned any map of Book of Mormon geography (see notation).

Sadly, however, but at the same time giving insight on why the First Presidency would be so extremely cautious in regards to giving even provisional endorsement to any map, we find that just a month after the above article appeared in print, Anthony Ivins writing to Joel Ricks and having to explain to him why they couldn't put his map out "as authentic." (see the 1908 notation in the *New World geography*-volume 1).

Note* See the Ricks articles for 1906. See the illustrated Ricks model for 1904.

[1909^](#) [B. H. Roberts](#)

New Witnesses for God , Vol. II. (3 Volumes) Deseret News: Salt Lake City, 1909. Reprinted in 1951.

B. H. Roberts was considered the foremost intellectual of the Church in his time. His 3-volume series, *New Witnesses for God* represented the most reasoned defense of the Book of Mormon. He combined internal analysis with extensive notes on American archaeology which he had gathered in the Picton Library while serving as a mission president in 1887-1888. In volume 2 Roberts set forth his position on Book of Mormon geography:

Lehi's Colony -- . . . 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. . . .

[1909^](#) [B. H. Roberts](#)

New Witnesses for God , Vol. III. (3 Volumes) Deseret News: Salt Lake City, 1909, pp. 509-510

In Volume III of his *New Witnesses for God*, B. H. Roberts responds to objections relative to the geography of the Book of Mormon. Specifically he comments on the Frederick G. Williams note about Lehi's travels:

I may say also that as these pages go to press the question of Book of Mormon geography is more than ever recognized as an open one by students of the book. That is to say, it is a question is Mormon views hitherto entertained respecting Book of Mormon lands have not been a misconception by reason of premises forced upon its students by the declaration of an alleged revelation. In a compendium of doctrinal subjects, published by the late Elders Franklin D. Richards and James A. Little, the following item appears:

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 Chili, thirty degrees south latitude.

The only reason so far discovered for regarding the [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.

Yet this alleged "revelation" has dominated all our thinking, and influenced all our conclusions upon the subject of Book of Mormon geography. Whereas, if this is not a revelation, the physical description relative to the contour of the lands occupied by the Jaredites and Nephites, that being principally that two large bodies of land were joined by a narrow neck of land--can be found between Mexico and Yucatan with the isthmus of Tehuantepec between. If the investigation now going on shall result in relieving us of the necessity of considering ourselves bound to uphold as a revelation the passage in Richards and Little's Compendium, here considered, many of our difficulties as to the geography of the Book of Mormon--if not all of them in fact, will have passed away. In that event much found in this treatise of the Book of Mormon relative to the Nephites being in South America--written under the impression that the passage in the above named Compendium was, as is there set forth, a revelation--will have to be modified.

And let me here say a word in relation to new discoveries in our knowledge of the Book of Mormon, and for matter of that in relation to all subjects connected with the work of the Lord in the earth. We need not follow our researches in any spirit of fear and trembling. We desire only to ascertain the truth; nothing but the truth will endure; and the ascertainment of the truth and the proclamation of the truth in any given case, or upon any subject, will do no harm to the work of the Lord which is itself truth. Nor need we be surprised if now and then we find our predecessors, many of whom bear honored names and deserve our respect and gratitude for what they achieved in making clear the truth, as they conceived it to be--we need not be surprised if we sometimes find them mistaken in their conceptions and deductions; just as the generation who succeed us in unfolding in a larger way some of the yet unlearned truths of the Gospel, will find that we have had some misconceptions and made some wrong deductions in our day and time. The book of knowledge is never a sealed book. It is never "completed

and forever closed;" rather it is an eternally open book, in which one may go on constantly discovering new truths and modifying our knowledge of old ones. The generation which preceded us did not exhaust by their knowledge all the truth, so that nothing was left for us in its unfolding; no, not even in respect of the Book of Mormon; any more than we shall exhaust all discovery in relation to that book and leave nothing for the generation following us to develop. All which is submitted, especially to the membership of the Church, that they may be prepared to find and receive new truths both in the Book of Mormon itself and about it.

Note* While this is the first documented evidence that Church authorities were beginning to notice problems in the total hemispheric concept of Book of Mormon geography at that time, it does not necessarily imply that Roberts was endorsing a more limited continental theory. It just implies that, for Roberts, the paradigm hemispheric model could be changed--it apparently would be easier to explain Lehi's landing and the subsequent Nephite migrations north to Columbia (Zarahemla) if Lehi wasn't required to land in Chile at 30 degrees south latitude. This distance problem was one which certain authors were struggling with.

[1909^](#) [Alvin Knisley](#) (RLDS)

Dictionary of the Book of Mormon, Independence, Missouri: Zion's Ensign, 1909.

Preface

The manuscript was prepared during some months preceding, close to the old Mexican frontier, at intervals during a missionary campaign. This work is definitive-not simply compilatory. It is a dictionary - not a concordance.

Lem'u-el, Valley of

In Arabia, at the mouth of the river Laman which emptied into the Red Sea. It was so named by Lehil (600 B.C.) and it was three days journey from Jerusalem. . . .

Boun'ti-ful

Land of. In Arabia. On the coast of the Indian Ocean, in the Asiatic continent. . . .

Ir're-an'tum

Name given by Lehi's company to the waters on the east coast of Arabia . . .

[1910^](#) [RLDS](#)

Report of the Committee on American Archaeology, Lamoni, IA: Herald House, 1910.

Preface-- This edition of the Report of the Committee on Archaeology has been revised, new matter added, corrections made, references to the authorized edition of the Book of Mormon inserted, and some illustrations supplied. . . .

The Nephites-- To begin with, the origin of the Nephites as a separate people began at Jerusalem. . . . By commandment they left Jerusalem and "came down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea," and "traveled in the wilderness in the borders which are nearer the Red Sea." . . . [what follows is a chronology of scriptural quotes relative to Lehi's journey to the promised land]

By consulting a map of Asia, and noting the direction traveled by the company, as cited above, it will be observed at once that "Bountiful" could not have been elsewhere than on the southeastern shore of Arabia, on the Gulf of Oman. (See map) The Red Sea lies in a south, southeast direction, hence they followed closely along its borders for along distance, and then moved nearly eastward from that time forth. This directions would keep them south of the Persian Gulf, and there was no chance of passing to the north of it. That point seems clear. . . .

Although this passage [of Lehi's party] across the waters was controlled by miracle, still it is reasonable to conclude that natural agencies would be employed by divine wisdom, if at hand, in conveying this little bark across the ocean. In order to learn as correctly as possible about such matters, such as currents and winds, Miss Louise Palfrey, secretary of the committee, wrote and obtained the following reply from this eminent authority, which will be of interest to the investigator. It indicates a possible reason why the little company embarked from the place they did.

"I submitted the following question to the Hydrographic Office at Washington, District of Columbia:

"By what winds or currents, especially winds, would a vessel starting from the eastern coast of Arabia arrive at the western coast of South America, somewhere along Chile? This case I suppose is before modern times; is when sailors were dependent upon the winds and the currents."

The answer received is as follows:

Hydrographic Office

Washington, D. C., September 5, 1907

Madam:

1. Replying to your inquiry of the 23d inst., regarding the winds and currents that a sailing vessel would experience on the voyage from the eastern coast of Arabia to the coast of Chile the Hydrographic Office, after investigating the wind and current charts of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, finds as follows:

2. From the coast of Arabia a vessel would sail, in the winter season, to cross the 10th parallel of latitude, south, in longitude 65 degrees east, while the average winds blowing at first from northeast, backing by way of north around to northwest: the currents would at first set toward the southwest, then south, and later eastward. From this position the best route would lie toward latitude 40 degrees south, longitude 70 degrees east, and the winds would prevail with fair steadiness at first from southeast, shifting later to east, northeast, north, northwest, and finally to west; the currents which then run toward the west would alter be found setting toward south and southeast. In the latitudes lying south of 40 degrees, favorable winds and currents may carry all the way across to the west coast of South America, and the vessel need not edge up toward the northward of the 45th parallel until she has gotten into mid-Pacific. On approaching the coast of Chile the Humboldt Current will set a vessel to the northward, and the winds will also be found to agree in direction with the current.

3. Should the departure from Arabia be made during the summer months, wind and current conditions are quite different, and it would be found advisable to lay the first part of the course so as to cross the 5th parallel of north latitude in longitude 65 degrees east. The prevailing winds are those of the southwest monsoons. Having reached the 5th parallel it is necessary to cross a belt of weaker winds whose general direction is toward the south as far as latitude 5 degrees south, from which point the southeast trades will prevail as far as latitude 25 degrees south in about longitude 55 degrees east, and the ocean currents will, in general, flow toward the westward. From the last named position it is advisable to continue southward until the prevailing westerly winds are met, which will be somewhere near the 35th parallel; after that westerly winds and easterly currents will unite to give the vessel free passage into the Pacific without proceeding southward of the 50th parallel, and these conditions will prevail over the pacific as described in the preceding paragraph.

4. It must be remembered that the notation of winds and currents among mariners is directly opposite. Thus while an easterly wind means one blowing from the eastward, an easterly current means one flowing toward the eastward. It should further be remembered that, while the prevalence of the trade winds and of the prevailing west winds in southern latitudes is fairly steady, there is a seasonal shifting of direction in the winds that prevail between Arabia and the equator. The last named fact would enable the vessel to steer a much more direct course from north to south during the season of

northeast monsoons (winter), whereas, during the southwest monsoon (summer) it would be necessary to sail much farther toward the eastward at the outset. This last fact, however, is not of any great disadvantage, as it is counterbalanced on reaching the region of southeast trades, which blow quite strongly between latitudes 10 degrees and 20 degrees south during July and August, growing slightly weaker from month to month as the end of the year approaches.

Respectfully,

Henry H. Barroll,

Commander, U. S. Navy (Ret.d), Acting Hydrographer

I looked up the date of sailing vessels, and while large sailing vessels are said not to have come into general use until in the beginning of the fourteenth century, I find, "The earliest Egyptian drawings show boats constructed of sawn planks, and having sails as well as numerous oars."

The Greeks and Romans used galleys, but contemporary with them,

The hardy Norsemen had chopping seas and Atlantic swells to fight with; their ships differed much from the stately galleys and quinqueremes of the empire. Far smaller, they were built more stoutly, with bluff bows, and a lug-sail which could be braced well up to the wind. The Norse ships must have been of considerable power, for there is good evidence that they had visited the coasts of the New World at an early period.--See article "Ship-building," Chambers' Encyclopaedia.

A tradition still preserved in China, says that a company of sailors, driven off shore by westerly winds, sailed many weeks until they came to a great continent where grew the aloe and other plants that were strange to them, but which we recognize as natives of Mexico. Even within the last hundred years, fifteen vessels have been driven across the Pacific to our western shores; and during all the previous ages we may believe that many accidents had occurred.--The Eclectic History of the United States, p. 10.

Now a leading point to be determined is as to where this landing was effected, according to our modern maps. We have decided that it was upon the west shore of South America, on the coast of Chile, not far from the thirtieth degree, south latitude. (See map.)

Should it be asked as to the ground upon which this conclusion is reached and others further on, the answer is that it is from the aggregation of facts, as noted in the "abridged" history of the people written by themselves: Compared with the geographical, hydrographical, and topographical outlines of the country as it now appears; the revealments of the archaeologists of modern times, the class of people and their manner of life found there; distances traveled over from place to place, as set out in the record; course of travel, varied kinds of animals found, climate, mineral wealth, natural boundaries,

fruitfulness of the soil, the latitude and longitude in which the leading transactions of the great nation occurred; the great forests, etc. These points and their relationship one to the other will be developed further on, so that the facts elicited will be both interesting and convincing as the history and map are followed. . . .

It will be noted that where this young colony landed there must be soil that is fruitful in production; that will grow pretty much every variety of cereals, vegetables, fruits, etc. at least that were known and in use for food at that time. They planted seeds of every kind, and they produced in abundance. The climate had to be most excellent, at least adapted to these conditions. There must be an abundance of animals, roaming in nature's vast forest, adapted to the use of man; there must be minerals of every kind--"all manner of ore," gold, silver, copper, etc., and it must be of easy access; it must be a place adapted to the growth and development of human life, physically and mentally. There must be a vast territory to open up and occupy. Were this not so, the critics of the Book of Mormon could easily find a vulnerable place at which to attack it. South America answers, in every respect, to the demands of the described conditions. It embraces thousands of miles of territory, and every variety of climate known is to be found there.

On page 106 we find the following Summary of the Committee's findings concerning geography:

In conclusion, the committee is aware that it has not produced a perfect map. It is reasonably certain, however, that the general outlines are correct, and that no future inquiry will be able to move them:

1. That the Nephites, after leaving Jerusalem, passed down along the eastern coast of the Red Sea, until near the Tropic of Cancer [approx. 23.50 degrees north latitude], and then crossed Arabia to the east, and landed in the country now known as Oman, on the Gulf of Oman, from which point they crossed the ocean, probably by going eastward."

[Note* There are no modern roads leading eastward exactly along the Tropic of Cancer. However, if one turns eastward "near" or just north of the Tropic of Cancer there is a road that travels eastward through the city of Medina and eastward through the city of Riyadh until it reaches the coast near modern-day country of Qatar on the Arabian Gulf. The road then runs eastward along the coast through the present-day United Arab Emirates until it reaches the coast of the Gulf of Oman and arrives in the coastal shipping port-city of Muscat in Oman. (see maps below)]

[1910 Map #1: Tropic of Cancer Route from the West Coast of Arabia to the East Coast of Oman. Geoprojects 1980. The Oxford Map of Arabia. Great Britain: Cook, Hammond & Kell, Mitcham, Surrey, 1980]

[1910 Map #2: Tropic of Cancer Route from the West Coast of Arabia to the East Coast of Oman. Geoprojects 1980. The Oxford Map of Arabia. Great Britain: Cook, Hammond & Kell, Mitcham, Surrey, 1980]

[1910 Map #3: Tropic of Cancer Route from the West Coast of Arabia to the East Coast of Oman. Geoprojects 1980. The Oxford Map of Arabia. Great Britain: Cook, Hammond & Kell, Mitcham, Surrey, 1980]

2. That they landed upon the west coast of South America on the coast of Chili.

Interestingly, on page 108 of the Summary, Number 16 on the list reads as follows:

16. While the committee is not so certain as to the exact locations of the cities of Lehi-Nephi, Middoni, Ishmael, Midian, Mormon, Jerusalem, etc.; yet they must have been somewhere in the regions of country as marked on the map. Neither are we certain that the Nephites landed as far south on the coast of Chili as the thirtieth parallel of latitude. It is known that great physical changes have taken place in the contour of Chili in the past, and even quite recently, the whole land to the north having been elevated by the influence of earthquakes; and at the time of the landing of the Nephites the country may have been much different in part to what it is now; and that there was an inviting landing place favorable for settlement five or six degrees to the north of the thirtieth parallel, just south of the desert of Atacama, and that the landing place was there. If this be true, it will not affect in the least other parts of the map as given. It would only shorten the distance traveled by Nephi and companions, when they separated from their brethren and entered the wilderness and made their way to Nephi, and founded that city. The same conditions of country in the Argentine Republic would obtain.

Note* This represented the most scientifically detailed approach to Lehi's voyage to date.

Note* Going north of the thirtieth parallel "five or six degrees" would bring us to Moreno Bay and the port city of Antofagasta, Chile [see map below], located on the same latitude as the Tropic of Capricorn (at about twenty-four degrees south latitude). Just north of this we find Mejillones Bay and at about 22.5 degrees south latitude we come to the port city of Cobija.

[1910 Map: Location of Antofagasta, Chile. "South America" map, Rand McNally and Company, 1902. BYU Library, Call # G 5200 1902 .R3]

Note* See the notation for 1898; see the maps for the 1884 and the 1888 notations.

[1910 Illustrated Map: Map of the Eastern and Western Continents. Showing Ocean Currents and General View of the Ancient Lands. Drawn by G. F. Weston. RLDS, Report of Committee on American Archaeology, Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing Co: 1910.]

[1910 Illustrated Map: Map of the World. Showing Probable Course of the Ancient Colonies Across the Ocean. Drawn by G. F. Weston. RLDS, Report of Committee on American Archaeology, Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing Co: 1910.]

[1910^ Charles A. Shook](#) (anti-Mormon)

Cumorah Revisited or "The Book of Mormon" and the Claims of the Mormons Re-examined from the Viewpoint of American Archaeology and Ethnology. Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Company, 1910

Note* Cumorah Revisited, a 589-page treatise by Charles Shook, represented a landmark book in the case against not only the Hemispheric Theory of Book of Mormon geography, but the poor scientific methods used by those who supported and defended this theory. On pages 51-55 he writes about Lehi's journey to the New World as detailed in the RLDS Committee on American Archaeology Report:

. . . The book further claims that, in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, there was dwelling at Jerusalem a prophet, Lehi by name, a righteous man. On account of the wickedness of the city, God commanded him to take his family and depart into the wilderness of Arabia . . . Eight years having elapsed since Lehi left Jerusalem the little company, which now numbered eight families by the command of God, built a ship, launched out into the Indian Ocean, and after a stormy voyage, during which the wicked Laman and Lemuel rebelled against their brother Nephi, landed "on the coast of Chili, not far from the thirtieth degree, south latitude."--Report, p. 11.

[1910 Illustration: Map of Nephite Lands. (according to the Book of Mormon). Charles A. Shook, Cumorah Revisited or "The Book of Mormon" and the Claims of the Mormons Re-examined from the Viewpoint of American Archaeology and Ethnology. Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Company, 1910, p. 52]

1910^ Samuel W. Traum (anti-Mormon)

Mormonism Against Itself, Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Company, 1910.

On pages 89-98 of this 321 anti-Mormon treatise, Samuel Traum critiques with some depth (at least for this time period) Lehi's proposed journey through Arabia according to the Book of Mormon. He writes:

We can pass without comment that remarkable journey which these people made from Jerusalem to the Red Sea, a distance approximating, if not exceeding, two hundred miles, on foot, carrying food and tents, and possibly some necessary change of clothing, and apparently in the space of three days, except as we may say that they allowed no grass to grow under their feet en route. . . .

They then traveled for a space of four days in a "south-southeast direction," which of course allowed them to skirt along the shore of the Red Sea. Then they again "did travel for a space of many days," in the same direction, which of course carried them yet farther along the shore of the same sea. Then "it came to pass that we did again take our journey, traveling nearly in the same course as in the beginning." This statement is just a little bewildering, for the reason that in the beginning they traveled in a southwesterly direction in going from Jerusalem to the Red Sea. If by "the beginning" the "author and proprietor" of the Book of Mormon means when they first began to follow the coastline of the Red Sea, and aims to say that they continued this course, then it is clear that they went still further down the coastline. It was at this geographical point that they had their first death in the person of Ishmael. (The entire account of these travels is found in 1 Nephi.) . . .

There is but little light that we can throw upon the exact route taken by these travelers, for the simple reason that the Mormon has no more light on these geographical questions than have we. But from this point on the shore of the Red Sea, wherever that spot may be, "it came to pass we did again take our journey in the wilderness; and we did travel nearly eastward, from that time forth. . . . And we did come to the land which we called Bountiful, because of much fruit and also of wild honey; and all of these things were prepared of the Lord that we might not perish. And we beheld the sea which we called Irreantum, which being interpreted is many waters. Just in whose language this sea was called Irreantum, Nephi does not say. If it was his own, then what was the occasion of telling the people the meaning of the word, when this was the very word that they used when they said "many waters"? . . . Was this in the Hebrew language? . . . from what language did he quote when he used the word "Irreantum"? . . .

Thus, in the space of forty-three words, there is told us all that is known of that remarkable journey by sea. And upon such meager data does the Mormon build his theory that these people came to the American shores. But which way did they come? Did the trip comprise approximately four thousand five hundred miles, or did they take the longer journey of approximately sixteen thousand miles? The fact is, there is not an intelligent Mormon who can give an intelligent reply to this query, for the very sufficient reason that he has not the data upon which to arrive at any opinion on the question. And what is more to the point, there is no proof that they ever landed on this continent at all. The specious reasoning of Orson Pratt is the ground of the Mormons' hope, and before we are through with him, we shall demonstrate, beyond peradventure, that he deliberately falsified the little information that he derived from Stephens and Catherwood. . . .

According to the Book of Mormon, we have substantially given in its own words the description of the journey of those Israelites from Jerusalem to America. We do not know at what point they halted upon their first coming to the Red Sea, except that it was by a river that emptied into the Red Sea. Making allowance for those journeys which they later took in that "south-southeast" direction, and keeping in mind that when they finally started across Arabia that they went nearly eastward, we infer that they were in that part of Arabia known as the Hejaz, situated between twenty-eight degrees and twenty-one degrees north latitude, along the shore of the Red Sea. Of this territory, Prof. W. Gifford Palgrave says:

The surface is with few exceptions barren; stony to the north, sandy to the east and south; what little irrigation it possesses is wholly from wells, deep sunk and brackish. Taking it as a whole, the Hejaz is, with the exception of the actual and recognized desert alone, the most hopelessly sterile in the whole Arabian peninsula.

If, however, because of the vagueness of the Book's utterances, the apologist for it seeks to drive us further southward, and we enter that territory known as Yemen, we shall find the description of it, as given in the same article above quoted, to be as follows:

Though the mountains are well supplied with water, no considerable rivers or streams find their way from them to the Red Sea, tropical evaporation combining with the light and porous soil to dry up the torrent beds, nor do any natural lakes exist.

And with this sentiment agrees every known authority. "There is no telegraph line, no newspaper, no railroad, and, strange to say, no river, in that vast area, except a few shallow beds which, during the spring, bring down water from the melting snow, but for nine months of the year are as dry as a crematory."

Equally difficult of solution is the problem in topography that the Mormon must solve when he takes the eastern side of Arabia, and compare it with the teachings of the Book of Mormon. Here we are not

so much at loss to decide upon a given locality; for the Mormons have themselves held it to be near the head of the Persian Gulf, and that the Persian Gulf is the Sea of Irreantum. They locate the shipbuilding enterprise on the Arabian side of the gulf. That, of course, brings it into the territory of El Hasa.

[Note* EL Hasa is located on the 25th degree north latitude. While George Reynolds proposed the Sea of Irreantum to be the Persian Gulf (which he later clarified and modified), I have been unable to locate any LDS sources previous to this anti-Mormon book that proposed Irreantum to be "near the head of the Persian Gulf." While the 1898 RLDS Committee report has Lehi turning eastward "near the Tropic of Cancer (about 23.5 degrees north latitude), they also say that "he landed in the country now known as Oman, on the Gulf of Oman."]

As we should have noted when considering the location of the Nephites on the borders of the Red Sea, it is hardly probable that they could have been so very far south, if, when they started across Arabia, traveling eastward, they went, as they must have gone, north of the Dahna, or Great Sandy Desert. It is this that leads to the conviction that, if they traveled eastward, they must have come into the territory of El Hasa, and could not, without having changed their direction, gone as far south as the territory of Oman. Now that these statements are before us, let us compare them with the facts as they exist outside the book. Says Palgrave:

Along the region of Hasa, and up to the head of the gulf, the coast continues low, but is enlivened by extensive green tracts of palm groves and other semitropical vegetation. The mountains are situated a good way inland, and not exceeding three thousand feet in their extreme height, and are of Jurassic formation. Copious springs, some of which are hot, and others tepid, break out in many places at their base, but are again absorbed in the sand or are dissipated by field irrigation before reaching the sea.

The "Jurassic formation" of the mountains shows that there has been no recent geologic change in that territory, hence we are warranted in the conclusion that geologically this country is the same as it was in the year 600 B.C. The mountains are themselves barriers against which the desert winds blow, so that there has been no change of the low land to the east of the mountains. While on the Persian side of the gulf there are mountains not far from the coastline, on the western or Arabian side the mountains are back from the coast from seventy-five to one hundred miles, while at the extreme northern end of the gulf the mountains are inland, upwards of one hundred and seventy-five miles.

Now, in the face of all this, we are asked to believe that when these people came down to the sea and called it Irreantum, that the voice of the Lord directed the hero, Nephi, to go up into the mountain to get, not alone his plans, but his materials, for shipbuilding, and that not alone did Nephi do this once, but "I, Nephi, went up into the mountain oft." The conclusion is so apparent that one shrinks from calling the reader's attention to something which he must have observed ere this: that it is a bombastic

ignoramus who is responsible for the composition of the book, and the errors which he commits are of such character as to show that he was ignorant of the topography of the country over which he would have his mythical people travel.

What kind of "ore" did Nephi get for the construction of his vessel? The Lord showed him where to get it, so the book says, but if he got anything on that side of Arabia that was suitable for shipbuilding, the supply was so limited that it was exhausted on the first vessel ever built in that yard. "In mineral products of a valuable description, the Arabia of our days is singularly poor." While myths are afloat that southern Arabia is "a land the hills of which are of gold and its dust silver," there is nowadays "nothing found to justify or even to account for such gorgeous statements. . . . Although the territory is one that in expanse is comparable to that portion of the United States lying between the Mississippi River and the Atlantic Ocean, yet in all that range of territory there has been no metal discovered that would be suitable for ship construction, except in the central part and the Sinaitic peninsula, either of which is hundreds of miles distant from the reputed spot where the vessel was built. And this fact goes far to strengthen the oft-repeated assertion that "the author and proprietor" of the Book of Mormon was illiterate. Smith's reputed illiteracy is confirmed, and the book is found to be false to the test of geographical and topographical facts. And, failing in this, it is not a real history, but a romance . . .

[1911^ Vincy R. Barker](#)

Map For Book of Mormon Study, Ogden, Utah: Vincy R. Barker, 1911

In 1911 Vincy Barker published a large map with some of the basic locations mapped according to authoritative references. The information quoted and described below appears on the bottom of the map.

Note

To Teachers:- Explain to classes that no means are available at present for determining the exact location of B. of M. points. This map is only suggestive, prepared after a careful consideration of the text and the reasoning and opinions of our best B. of M. students. For further research, see Richards' and Little's Compendium, Reynolds' Dict. of B. of M. and B. of M. Concordance, Y.M.M.I.A. Manual 1903-4 and BYU College Bulletin Vol. 3, No. 2.

There is an Authoritative References list for the cities or locations placed on the map. The authoritative references given for Lehi's journey all come from the Book of Mormon verses themselves with the exception of Lehi's landing site ("Land of Promise"), which also lists Richards' and Little's Compendium, p. 289. [This Compendium reference has Lehi landing in Chile at 30 degrees south

latitude] There is a lengthy list of "Principal Cities not Located" with a corresponding reference verse from the Book of Mormon listed for each city, location or hill.

[1911 Map: Map For Book of Mormon Study (part A) Vincy R. Barker, Ogden, Utah, 1911.]

[1911 Map: Map For Book of Mormon Study (part B) Vincy R. Barker, Ogden, Utah, 1911.]

[1913^ Alvin R. Ellis](#) (RLDS)

"The Divinity of the Book of Mormon" in Zion's Ensign, vol. 24, no. 34, Thursday August 21, 1913, p. 4.

"Lecture delivered at South Boardman, Michigan, February 9th, 1913 by Alvin R. Ellis"

There were three colonies that came from Asia to America. . . . The second colony came from Jerusalem, about 600 B.C. . . . and landed on the western coast of South America, or Chile.

Note* This was copied by me in longhand from the actual newspaper located in Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library.

[1914^ James E. Talmage](#)

The Story and Philosophy of "Mormonism" Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1914,

The principal company was led by one Lehi, described as a personage of some importance and wealth . . . The book told tells of the journeyings [of Lehi's people] across the water, in vessels constructed according to revealed plan, of the people's landing on the western shores of South America near the spot now marked by the city of Valparaiso probably somewhere in Chile.

Note* The above text is mostly the same as that which appeared in Talmage's 1901 publication (see notation) The above text has been marked to reflect the editing changes and additions Talmage made from his 1901 publication. In 1901 Talmage had specifically identified Valparaiso as the landing spot.

[1915^ James E. Talmage](#)

Jesus the Christ Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1915. Reprinted in over 50 editions up to the present.

Since it was first published in September 1915, *Jesus the Christ* has been a classic text on the life and ministry of the Savior. . . . Dr. Talmage first presented his study on the Savior as a series of lectures delivered under the auspices of the Deseret Sunday School Union Board at the LDS University in Salt Lake City from September 1904 to April 1909. He was subsequently asked by the First Presidency of the Church to publish the lectures in book form. Because of other commitments, he was unable to complete this assignment for several years.

On December 8, 1911, Dr. Talmage was ordained a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Less than three years later he was able at last to continue his work on the manuscript, writing in longhand in a council room on the fourth floor of the Salt Lake Temple. As chapters were completed, he presented them to the First Presidency, members of the Twelve, and Sunday School board members.

In his journal under date of April 19, 1915, Elder Talmage wrote: "finished the actual writing on the book 'Jesus the Christ,' to which I have devoted every spare hour since settling down to the work of composition on September 14th last. Had it not been that I was privileged to do this work in the Temple it would be at present far from completion. I have felt the inspiration of the place and have appreciated the privacy and quietness incident thereto. . . . (About this Book)

On page 55 we find the following:

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, whereon they landed (590 B.C.)

Note* Whereas in his previous publications Talmage had identified the landing spot as "Valparaiso" and "in Chile," here he states only that they landed on "the western coast of South America."

Source: ^James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*. Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1983.

[1915^](#) [Janne Sjodahl](#)

Authenticity of the Book of Mormon, 1915, p. 21

About six hundred years before our era, Lehi and his company were brought from Jerusalem. They came, first, to the Red Sea, and then, after having followed its shore line for many days, took up their journey in an easterly direction and came to the Arabian gulf. Here they constructed a vessel, embarked, and were carried across the Indian and Pacific oceans to the western coast of South America.

[1916^](#) [Joel E. Ricks](#)

Helps to the Study of the Book of Mormon, Independence, MO, Zion's, 1916

The Evidence of Geography-- . . . The Nephite colony came from Jerusalem, and landed on the western coast of South America in northern Chili, and built up its civilization in the high valleys of the Andes, from lake Titicaca to Quito. . . .

The colony led by Mulek came from Jerusalem westward, and landed on the northern coast of South America, near the mouth of the Magdalena river. Down to the time when they were joined by the Nephites, this colony had gradually occupied the Magdalena valley and the plains extending westward to the isthmus. . . .

If the reader will make a close comparison between the accompanying maps and the references to locations made in the text, he will find complete harmony. . . .

(see the notation for 1904)

[1916^](#) [J. A. Gunsolley, ed.](#) (RLDS)

The Religio Quarterly Senior Grade, vol. 15, Num. 1, Lamoni, Iowa: Zion's Religio-Literary Society, at Herald Publishing House. October, November, December, 1916, p. 6

Lesson One: God's Covenant with Lehi-- . . .

The Lesson Setting

Lesson Text. 2 Nephi 1: 1-51; 1:1-4

When. About 588 B. C.

Where. In the promised land--western coast of South America, about thirty degrees south latitude.

[1916 Illustrated Map: Map of the Eastern and Western Continents. Showing Ocean Currents and General View of the Ancient Lands. Drawn by G. F. Weston. J. A. Gunsolley, ed., The Religio Quarterly Senior Grade, vol. 15, Num. 1, Lamoni, Iowa: Zion's Religio-Literary Society, at Herald Publishing House. October, November, December, 1916.]

[1916 Illustrated Map: Map of the World. Showing Probable Course of the Ancient Colonies Across the Ocean. Drawn by G. F. Weston. J. A. Gunsolley, ed., The Religio Quarterly Senior Grade, vol. 15, Num. 1, Lamoni, Iowa: Zion's Religio-Literary Society, at Herald Publishing House. October, November, December, 1916.]

[1917^ J. Bert Sumsion](#)

"The Book of Mormon: The Light of the Western Hemisphere," in Liahona The Elders' Journal, Vol. 14, No. 33, February 13, 1917, pp. 517-519.

Bert Sumsion writes:

According to the history, Lehi left Jerusalem about 580 B.C., about the time King Zedekiah was taken captive into Babylon. Under his leadership the colony was brought to America. They arrived on the west coast of South America, near Chile. From this point they began to build a remarkable civilization . . .

[1917^ Curtis W. Clark](#) (RLDS)

"The Mound Builders and the Indians," in Saints Herald 64 (14, 21 November 1917): pp. 1085-89, 1109-14.

[The following article was written by Brother Clark for the Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, and published in the April, 1917, number. It is reproduced here by kind permission of the editors of that publication, and though written primarily for those who have not espoused our faith, will be of much interest to our readers--Editors]

. . . The Book of Mormon tells of three groups of population that inhabited the continents of North and South America in times past. . . .

The second colony of which the book relates left Jerusalem about the year 600 B.C., and originated with Lehi and his four sons. These people crossed the deserts of Arabia and eventually, after a long voyage, arrived on this continent on the Peruvian portion of the coast of South America.

[1917^](#) [Louis Edward Hills](#) (RLDS)

The Geography of Mexico and Central America from 2234 B.C. to 421 A.D. (Independence, Missouri), pp. 5-6.

A member of the RLDS Church, Louis Edward Hills is credited with being the first to develop a Book of Mormon geography model that was strictly limited to Mexico and Central America (see illustration below). He apparently seems to correlate Lehi's landing with the Nahuas and Mayas on the Pacific coast of El Salvador. It is also interesting the he apparently correlates the Jaredites with the Quinames and the Mulekites with the Olmecs and has them both coming across the Atlantic Ocean and landing in the Veracruz area of Mexico bordering the Gulf of Mexico. He wrote a number of books which derived their geography from the traditional histories of the ancient Americans written by Ixtlilxochitl and others, and the Popol Vuh.

Lehi took his family and departed into the wilderness, and later was joined by Ishmael and his family, and Zoram, the servant of Laban. They went down by the Red Sea, across to the Indian Ocean, and there built a ship and sailed across the Pacific Ocean, landing on the west coast of Central America. This place was called the land of their first inheritance. . . .

"And on the west in the land of Nephi in the place of their father's first inheritance, and thus bordering along by the seashore." (B of M., p. 387)

This shows the place of their father's first inheritance. It was bordering along on the Pacific seashore, and was a part of the land of Nephi, and was located by Alma on the west in the land of Nephi. (I think the boundary lines of lands described in the Book of Mormon record have never been much changed.) They were led by the Lord across the Pacific Ocean, and from descriptions of the Waters of Sebus (Lake Hopango) I believe Lehi and people landed in La Union Bay, on the west side of the Gulf of Fonseca; and

it is very probable that Salvador, or the eastern part of Salvador, was the land referred to as "the land of their fathers' first inheritance," yet considered by the Nephites as a part of the land of Nephi.

[1917 Illustrated Model: Geographical Locations Made From Ancient Historical Records and Traditions of the Indians. Louis E. Hills, Geography of Mexico and Central America from 2234 B.C. to 421 A.D., n.p.: Independence, Missouri, 1917. Also Hills' A Short Work on the Popol Vuh and the Traditional History of the Ancient Americans by Ixt-lil-Xochitl, Independence, MO; Also A Study of the Geography of the Book of Mormon, n.p., 1920. Also A Friendly Discussion of the Book of Mormon Geography, n.p.: Independence, Missouri, 1924. See also Hills' Historical Data from Ancient Records and Ruins of Mexico and Central America, 1919. Note* Copyright on map is dated 1923, so it might have been added to a later edition.]

[1917 Illustrated Map: Probable Course of the Ancient Colonies across the Ocean, Louis Edward Hills, Historical Data from Ancient Records and Ruins of Mexico and Central America, 1919,]

Note* Although in 1873 William H. Kelley (also RLDS) had proposed the location of Lehi's landing to be either "upon the coast of Central or South America," this is the first time anyone had proposed a landing in Central America in a specific location.

[1918 or earlier](#) (abt. Joseph F. Smith)

The Instructor 73, no. 4, April 1938, p. 160

In the Instructor of 1938, following a reprinting of the 1890 statement by George Q. Cannon, a letter is printed which is signed, "Frederick J. Pack, Chairman, Gospel Doctrine Committee." It questions the correctness of the statement in the 1884 Richards and Little Compendium supposedly revealing the route followed by Lehi. (see 1884 notation) 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)

Note* While President Joseph F. Smith refused to name Lehi's landing place, some 30 years earlier (1887) George Q. Cannon, the first counselor in the First Presidency, had declared that as far as Book of Mormon geography was concerned, there were only "a few points which can be identified." One of the points that he identified was that Lehi and his family "landed near the Chilean city of Valparaiso." What is even more interesting here is that at the time of Cannon's declaration concerning Lehi's landing place (1887), George Q. Cannon was first counselor in the First Presidency and Joseph F. Smith was second counselor.

History is hard to recapture in all its entirety and circumstances. It is impossible to know if "the exact landing place of Lehi and his company" was the specific reason why President Smith declined to approve the map. Perhaps the map contained many other details besides Lehi's landing place which were speculative. Thus President Smith was perhaps okay with a statement (such as had been said by President Cannon) but not okay with a map. On the other hand, President Smith would most probably have been aware of the findings of B. H. Roberts in regards to the Lehi's Travels statement.

Note* Joseph F. Smith's wording that he couldn't "approve a map showing the exact landing place of Lehi and his company" seems to echo the wording and reasoning of George Reynolds--See the 1888 notation on The Story of the Book of Mormon.

(See the 1887 notation; note B. H. Roberts comments in 1909)

[1919^](#) [Louis Edward Hills](#)

Historical Data from Ancient Records and Ruins of Mexico and Central America, Independence, MO: n.p., 1919

In his introduction to an extensive study of traditional Mesoamerican Indian legends, Louis Hills makes some remarks which are pertinent to the study of Book of Mormon geography, especially in light of his previous 1917 publication, *The Geography of Mexico and Central America from 2234 B.C. to 421 A.D.* Under the heading, "Who Were the Ancient Americans?" Louis Hills states the following:

Geography is an indispensable requisite for the study of history; to associate the geography of a country with its history is the most efficient method of rendering the study both interesting and instructive. . . .

Traditional history of Mexico and Central America tells of three colonies who came to the country from across the sea; one came from where the sun sets (west), or across the Pacific, and two came from where the sun rises (east), or across the Atlantic. . . .

[1919 Map of Mexico and Central America From 2234 B.C. to 421 A.D. Louis Hills. Louis Edward Hills Historical Data from Ancient Records and Ruins of Mexico and Central America, Independence, MO: n.p., 1919]

[1919^ Ralph W. Farrell](#) (RLDS)

"Book of Mormon Geography," in Saints Herald 66 (12 March 1919): p. 249.

The study of the Book of Mormon claims is interesting and vital. The matter dealing with its archaeology, as presented by Brother L. E. Hills, is as fascinating as it is probably correct. Surely we cannot brush it aside without sufficient reasons, and though I have heard others adversely criticize our brother's findings, yet I have neither heard nor seen proofs that contradicted his positions. The very hasty and brief investigation I have made of the latest publications have confirmed me in the belief that Central America is the place where the Nephites landed when they rediscovered this country. . . .

[1919^ Nephi Jensen](#)

"First Nephi and Archaeology," in the Improvement Era, vol. xxii, no. 10, August, 1919,

In the title to this article, we find that it is "By Nephi Jensen, President of the Canadian Mission." He writes:

Every student of American history can instantly recall the time and place of the first landing of Christopher Columbus on American soil. But many of these students would hesitate before answering as to the date of the landing of John Cabot. Nor is it at all strange that the first event should be more easily remembered than the second. The mind naturally seeks for a starting place in history; and the circumstances incident to the beginning of an epoch impress themselves the most vividly upon the mind. Besides the almost universal custom of erecting monuments commemorative of historical beginnings, the equally prevalent ceremonial celebration of these events also tends to perpetuate the memory of great world movements.

It is for these same reasons that mythology retains the most distinct stories of migrations and colonization. Nor is America an exception to this rule. Each new effort of the American archaeologist to look behind the enigma of the American Indian reveals new proof that the circumstances attending the first settlement of America as told in the Book of Mormon, are the most perfectly preserved in the traditions of the American tribes.

And to one who believes the Book of Mormon, it is not all surprising that T. Athol Joyce's recent work, *South American Archaeology*, published in 1912, should furnish new and additional corroboration of the story of the Nephite migration to the "promised land."

The salient historical incidents connected with this migration, as recorded in First Nephi are as follows: (1) That the four sons of Lehi, who left Jerusalem, 600 B.C., were the chief figures in the colonization of South America (1 Nephi 2-3);

Here are six historical items relating the Nephite colonization of South America, as detailed in the first book of the Book of Mormon. . . .

4. Both Nephi and Joyce designate the land which the colony set sail for as the "promised land." "Ayar was the last to perish; he had developed wings, and when the travelers came to sight of their promised land, his brother bade him fly to the top of the hill, where afterwards stood the great Sun-temple, and take possession" (1b 79)

Note* Without reading Joyce's book, it is hard to know at this time where "the great Sun-temple" was located. There are a number of temples in South America known as "Temple of the Sun." However, one probability might be the Temple of the Sun located in the city of Pachacamac near Lima, Peru. (see the maps below) This ruin overlooks the Pacific Ocean and is believed to have been a site of ancient pilgrimages intended to honor the pre-Inca creator-god Pachacamac, and later the Inca god Viracocha.

Note* The first time Lima, Peru was proposed as Lehi's landing site was in 1876 by George M. Ottinger--see notation.

[1919 Map: Location of Pachacamac near Lima Peru. Dr. Paul R. Cheesman, *Early America and the Book of Mormon: A Photographic Essay of Ancient America*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1972, p. 68]

[1919 Map: Location of Peru. Dr. Paul R. Cheesman, *Early America and the Book of Mormon: A Photographic Essay of Ancient America*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1972, p. 64]

[1919^ James E. Talmage](#)

The Vitality of Mormonism, Boston, MA: Gorham Press, 1919, pp. 134-135. Reprinted in 1948.

Talmage writes:

In the year 600 B.C., when Zedekiah ascended the throne of Judah, the word of the Lord came to Lehi directing him to take his family and flee from Jerusalem into the wilderness of Arabia. . . . The migrating colony journeyed by slow stages for about eight years in the desert, . . . Eventually they reached the shores of the Arabian sea, where, divinely directed, they built a vessel, in which they were carried by wind and current across the ocean to the western coast of South America.

[Pre-1920 Willard Young](#) (Theoretical model)

Willard Young was born in Salt Lake City on April 30, 1852. He was the third child (and only son) of Clarissa Ross Young, and the thirtieth child of Brigham Young. In the years preceding 1920, apparently Willard Young became the first recorded LDS proponent of a limited Mesoamerican theory for Book of Mormon geography. In other words, he was the first LDS leader to claim that from Lehi's landing to the scene of the final battles in the Book of Mormon ("Cumorah"), all of the historical scenes took place in Mesoamerica. Whether or not he derived any of his ideas from noted RLDS scholar Louis Hills, who also proposed a limited Mesoamerican setting in 1917, is not known at this point in my research. My clues on Willard Young's ideas come first from the fact that in 1927, Janne Sjodahl wrote that Willard Young was asked by the 1920 Church Committee reviewing geography for the 1921 edition of the Book of Mormon to present his respective views, which implies that his views were somewhat developed and different from the others who were invited. Secondly, I have in my possession a copy of a typescript from an item written by Willard Young from the Church Historical Department entitled, "Notes on Book of Mormon geography." Although it has no date it correlates verse references specifically with the 1921 edition. (see the 1921 notation) According to these writings, Lehi's group landed in the Gulf of Fonseca (which sits on the border of El Salvador and Honduras). Thirdly, this proposed location for Lehi's landing is in the same area as proposed by the RLDS scholar Louis Hills. (see the 1917 notation). Their settings are slightly different, but the similarities and the time period cannot be overlooked. Fourthly, although Sjodahl summarizes Willard Young's perspective in his 1827 writings, I have no way of knowing whether Sjodahl was taking his information from what Willard Young presented at the 1920 meetings, or what he subsequently wrote down afterwards.

The real contribution of Young was to deal with the external scene in real world terms instead of just a map. He knew and talked about the topography, climate, vegetation and travel conditions in tropical America in a more concrete way as he had worked in Panama.

Note* As far as I can tell, Willard Young was not considered some "radical" Mormon, or "prodigal" son. On the contrary, "As the first native Utahn to become an important officer in the Army, and the first to attain national eminence as an engineer and educator, Colonel Young helped to establish the heritage of achievement, of broad and helpful service, and of honor and faithfulness that Latter-day Saints seek to emulate." His influence in the study of Book of Mormon geography was definitely felt. (Source: ^Leonard J. Arrington, Willard Young: The Prophet's Son at West Point," in Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, pp. 37-46)

(See the 1920 Committee notation, the 1921 Young notation, and the 1927 Sjodahl notation)

1920^

LDS Church Committee Reviews Geography for the 1921 Edition of the Book of Mormon

On 18 March 1920 Elder George F. Richards was appointed chairman of a committee to revise and correct the Book of Mormon. The Church committee (composed of Orson F. Whitney, Anthony W. Ivins, Joseph Fielding Smith, Melvin J. Ballard, George F. Richards, and James E. Talmage) was given, as part of their assignment, the duty of evaluating Orson Pratt's geographical footnotes. After hearing many hours of presentations on the geography of the Book of Mormon, they saw fit to delete all of Orson Pratt's geographical footnotes from the new edition of the Book of Mormon. The following is the eliminated footnote for 1 Nephi 18:23 which refers to Lehi's landing site: "Believed to be the coast of Chile South America"

Source: ^Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson, eds., Studies in Scripture, Vol. 1: The Doctrine and Covenants [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989], p. 17. For a specific listing of all the material changed by the Talmage Committee, see ^V. Mack Sumner, "An Exploration of the Footnotes in the 1911 Edition, Used by the Talmage Committee," written for Daniel Ludlow's course--Graduate Religion 622, External Evidences, August, 1967.

Note* Some of the people who presented their views and perspectives on Book of Mormon geography to the committee were Janne Sjodahl, B. H. Roberts, Joel Ricks, Anthony Ivins and Willard Young. Sjodahl would record these theories together with another one by Stuart Bagley in The Improvement Era in 1927 ("Suggested Key to Book of Mormon Geography," The Improvement Era, 30, September 1927, 974-87, 1002)

(See the notation for 1879, 1927)

Chronological Summary of Lehi's Route to the Valley of Lemuel

Note* New descriptive words relative to Lehi's route to the valley of Lemuel will be bolded. Major authoritative pronouncements will be italicized.

1830 Book of Mormon

1 N. 2:4: And it came to pass that he departed into the wilderness. . . 5: And he came down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea; and he traveled in the wilderness in the borders which are nearer the Red Sea; and he did travel in the wilderness

1836 Frederick G. Williams

The course that Lehi traveled from the city of Jerusalem . . . They traveled nearly south, southeast direction

1840 Orson Pratt

They were first led to the eastern borders of the Red Sea;

1841 Benjamin Winchester

Lehi . . . fled into the wilderness. He pitched his tent in the wilderness near the Red Sea

[1841 Charles B. Thompson](#)

[Lehi's colony] went in to the borders of the wilderness near the shore of the Red sea . .

[1842 John Taylor or J.S.](#)

Lehi went down by the Red Sea

[1842 Daniel P. Kidder](#)

In a polemical attack he writes:

. . . the first query that arises is, why were they not directed to the Mediterranean Sea, which was so near Jerusalem, instead of being made to perform the long and perilous journey to the borders of the Red Sea? More especially since the voyage through the former would have been shorter by six or seven thousand miles, (no trifling distance), than the one performed according to the data given.

[1848 John E. Page](#)

They traveled to the Red Sea, and then "on the borders thereof," an eastwardly direction,

[1851 Parley P. Pratt](#)

After leaving Jerusalem, they wandered in the wilderness of Arabia, and along the shores of the Red Sea,

[1870 Orson Pratt](#)

He brought them from Jerusalem first down to the Red Sea. They travelled along the eastern borders of the Red Sea

[1873 William H. Kelley](#)

they left Jerusalem in a south easterly direction, and afterwards went east, to the shore of India,

[1876 Orson Pratt](#)

They came to the eastern borders of the Red Sea, where they encamped, and . . . proceeded for many days in their journey along the eastern borders of the sea

[1888 George Reynolds](#)

This volume presents one unique feature, in that it is the first attempt made to illustrate the Book of Mormon; . . . Each artist has given his own ideas of the scenes depicted . . .

Reynolds writes: "When Lehi and his family left Jerusalem they traveled southward to the borders of the Red Sea.

[1888 "Hagoth"](#)

Note* This is the first time that the specific route to the "Gulf of Akabah" from Jerusalem has been detailed by an LDS author. He writes:

Journey from Jerusalem to the Promised Land-- The Book of Mormon does not give us as full an account of the journey from Jerusalem as we would wish, but enough is said to enable us to locate the route pretty correctly. After leaving Jerusalem they "came down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea, and they journeyed in the wilderness in the borders nearer the Red Sea." After they had traveled three days in the wilderness, they came to a river flowing into the Red Sea, which they called Laman. In a little valley near the mouth of this river they made an encampment.

Just south of the Dead Sea and extending to the Gulf of Akabah, an arm of the Red Sea, is a long narrow valley, on either side of which are high desert plains. In ancient times this valley was pretty well watered, here and there little fountains existed to gladden the weary Arab traveler who passed this way to go down into Egypt. The stone city of Petra was built on the eastern side of the valley about midway between the two seas. The route from Jerusalem to the Red Sea passed through this valley.

1891 [George Reynolds](#)

LEHI . . . 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. . . .

LEMUEL, VALLEY OF After three days' journey through the desert bordering the upper waters of the Red Sea (Gulf of Arabia) Lehi and his colony reached a small valley wherein they camped and built an altar to the Lord. . . . After a stay of considerable length, Lehi continued his journey down the shores of the Red Sea.

1894 [J. R. Lambert](#)

Journey to the Red Sea [a discussion of the distance (supposedly "three days" between Jerusalem and the valley of Lemuel)

. . . we are gravely told that in three days Lehi and his family traveled from Jerusalem to the Red Sea. "It would," it is said, "require nearly three weeks." . . . Let the Book of Mormon speak for itself. . . . " And it came to pass that he departed into the wilderness. And he left his house . . . And it came to pass that when he had traveled three days in the wilderness, he pitched his tent in a valley by the side of a river of water . . .

One very simple thing . . . to bear in mind that the history was written after the events occurred, and the events are not always recorded in the order in which they occurred. This, as every good critic knows, is frequently the case in the Bible history . . .

The plain statements are these: They traveled three days in the wilderness, when Lehi pitched his tent in a valley which was by the side of a river, which river emptied into the Red Sea. How far it was from Jerusalem to the wilderness is not stated, nor do our critics inform us. How far the place of encampment was from the Red Sea is not stated, but "the valley," in which they encamped, "was in the borders near the mouth thereof"--the mouth of the river. If it be said, "We have no account of any distance being traveled by them before the three days' journey," we reply, neither have we any account of their encampment for the night before the one which occurred at the end of the three days' travel in the wilderness; and if this was the first, then it is probable that they traveled at nights as well as in the daytime. However, as it is in Bible history, so it is in the Book of Mormon, many things occurred which were not recorded. It is not at all probable that they stepped right out of the capital city into the wilderness.

The Red Sea has two large arms, one of which we now call the Gulf of Suez, the other, the Gulf of Akabah. The latter extends towards Jerusalem, and is about one hundred miles long. The Hebrews called any large body of water a sea, lake or pool. The Gulf of Suez is frequently referred to as the Red Sea, in the Bible, because it is a part of it. The Gulf of Akabah is also a part of it, and when they came to this gulf, if this was the course of their travel, they came to the Red Sea. It is not over one hundred and sixty miles from Jerusalem to the Gulf of Akabah, and but little more than this to the Gulf of Suez. We will suppose that they traveled twenty-five miles before striking the wilderness, and that they were twenty-five miles from the mouth of the gulf when they encamped. This would leave one hundred and ten miles to be traveled over in three days; i.e., thirty-seven and two thirds miles per day. All this is within the statements of the record, and furnishes no proper data upon which to reject its statements. We have reason to believe that the people were strong, they were lightly laden, and fleeing before their enemies.

[1898 RLDS Comm. on Archaeology](#)

By commandment they left Jerusalem and "came down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea," and "traveled in the wilderness in the borders which are nearer the Red Sea." after leaving Jerusalem, passed down along the eastern coast of the Red Sea,

[1899 James E. Talmage](#)

The company journeyed somewhat east of south, keeping near the borders of the Red Sea;

[1900 George Reynolds](#)

Laman, River.-- A small Arabian river, (so named by Lehi) which emptied into the upper waters of the Red Sea. . . .

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.

[1903 B. H. Roberts](#)

Lehi's colony traversed from Jerusalem, nearly a southeast direction

[1904 Joel Ricks](#)

On page 289 of the Compendium, we find the following in regard to the course taken by Lehi after leaving Jerusalem:--"They traveled nearly a south-southeast direction

[1906 S. W. L. Scott](#)

Note* For the first time someone brings up the lack of rivers in Arabia.

When Lehi and family journeyed from Jerusalem to the Indian Ocean through Arabia, it is urged that the Book of Mormon makes huge blunders in its record of the itinerary. Page 4, paragraph 14, states: "And it came to pass that when he had traveled three days in the wilderness, he pitched his tent in a valley by the side of a river of water. . . . he called the name of the river Laman, and it emptied into the Red Sea; and the valley was in the borders near the mouth thereof." The objector says: "There is no river emptying into the Red Sea from the eastern or Arabian side; Arabia being a desert, has no river system." While Arabia is a desert region, it has a large number of dried-up watercourses. Instead of a river system, there is a system of wadys--great receptacles for the water brought down by the mountains. There is a possibility that the rivers then running through the country may have sunken and disappeared by upheaval. The Bible Dictionary says: "The land at the head of the gulf has arisen. The sea has retired gradually since [that time]. The sea has receded many miles." Besides, hear what the encyclopedia says: "Of the rivers of Arabia, none are navigable; few are perennial or reach the sea. Some such, however, have been marked by the travelers, Wellsted and W. B. Harris. Glaser would identify the Wady Hund, first traced by Doughty, which traverses the Hijaz and flows into the Red Sea." Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 1, p. 132. The New International Encyclopedia says: "The Wady Rumen is the longest river, traversing under different names the entire country from west to east."--Volume 1., p. 691. This river is in the northern part of Arabia, and about three days' journey down the Arabian shore of the Red Sea.

[Note* At this time I am unable to locate either the Wady Hund or the Wady Rumen.]

[1909 B. H. Roberts](#)

Lehi's Colony -- . . . 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,

[1910 Samuel W. Traum](#)

Traum critiques with some depth (at least for this time period) Lehi's proposed journey through Arabia according to the Book of Mormon. He writes:

We can pass without comment that remarkable journey which these people made from Jerusalem to the Red Sea, a distance approximating, if not exceeding, two hundred miles, on foot, carrying food and tents, and possibly some necessary change of clothing, and apparently in the space of three days, except as we may say that they allowed no grass to grow under their feet en route. . . .

We do not know at what point they halted upon their first coming to the Red Sea, except that it was by a river that emptied into the Red Sea.

1915 James E. Talmage

The company journeyed somewhat east of south, keeping near the borders of the Red Sea; then,

1915 Janne Sjodahl

About six hundred years before our era, Lehi and his company were brought from Jerusalem. They came, first, to the Red Sea,

Chronological Summary of Lehi's Proposed Route from Valley of Lemuel to Bountiful

Note* New descriptive words relative to Lehi's landing will be bolded. Major authoritative pronouncements will be italicized.

1836 Frederick G. Williams

They traveled nearly south, southeast direction until they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude. Then nearly east to the Sea of Arabia.

Note* Laying aside the question of revelation in regards to the Lehi's Travels statement, let me make a few comments on the practical aspect of its content. If Lehi came to "the nineteenth degree of north latitude," then "nearly east to the Sea of Arabia," he might have some major obstacles. It would all depend on the interpretation of the words "Nearly east to the Sea of Arabia." First of all, the nearest town of any consequence to the 19th degree parallel is Al Qunfidhah on the coast of the Red Sea. From this point there is no major road leading directly east, and even if there were, one would be traveling directly over the Aisir Mountains and then directly through "The Empty Quarter," reaching the point Ras Madrasah on the Arabian Sea. This is something which is not reasonable to expect.

On the other hand, if one were to continue following the coastal road beyond Al Qunfidhah there is a gradual swing eastward along a known road over the Asir Mountains to the town of Najran and then skirting the southern end of The Empty Quarter. Although it is approximately 200 miles towards Najran until the road goes directly eastward, the phrase "nearly east to the Sea of Arabia" would be completely acceptable here. This route would later be examined and detailed by the Hiltons in 1976 (see the 1976 notation). So from a strictly scientific sense, the Lehi's Travels statement would not be out of line for Lehi's travels through Arabia. Whether this information was available to Frederick G. Williams in 1836 is unknown.

1840 Orson Pratt

"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 south-east direction; after which they altered their course nearly eastward, until they came to the great waters "

1841 Benjamin Winchester

"After a long and tedious journey, they came to the great waters, or the Ocean"

1842 John Taylor or Jos. Smith

"that Lehi went down by the Red Sea to the great Southern Ocean"

1842 Daniel P. Kidder

Note* Daniel Kidder would raise questions about the scarcity of food and water if Lehi took "an easterly course from the borders of the Red Sea . . . across the Desert of Arabia to the Persian Gulf." Where he got the idea that Lehi traveled "across the Desert of Arabia to the Persian Gulf" is unknown at present. In this chronology, neither wordings had been specifically proposed as of this date.

1851 Parley P. Pratt

"they wandered in the wilderness of Arabia, and along the shores of the Red Sea, for eight years . . . Arriving at the sea coast"

1855 Parley P. Pratt

"and after wandering for eight years in the wilderness of Arabia, came to the seacoast"

1865 Joseph F. Smith

While working in the Church Historian's Office, Joseph F. Smith writes a note on the Lehi's Travels statement: "They travelled nearly a south-south-east direction until they came to the 19th deg. of north latitude, then nearly east to the sea of Arabia"

1866 Orson Pratt

"they sailed from the southern portions of Arabia"

1868 George A. Smith

"took a south-easterly direction, until they reached the Persian Gulf"

Note* While the Persian Gulf might be equated with the Arabian Gulf, there is a difference between the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. The Persian Gulf extends northward from the Strait of Hormuz, which is located at about 26 degrees north latitude.

1870 Orson Pratt

"They travelled along the eastern borders of the Red Sea for many days, and then bore off in an eastern direction which brought them to the Arabian Gulf." [see 1868 above]

1873 William H. Kelley

"they left Jerusalem in a south easterly direction, and afterwards went east, to the shore of India, from which they embarked"

Note* This is the first time that India has been proposed as Lehi's embarkation point.

1876 Orson Pratt

"This little company proceeded for many days in their journey along the eastern borders of the sea; after which they altered their course nearly eastward, and came to what they called the great waters; this must have been the borders of the Arabian Gulf or Indian Ocean."

Note* Here Orson Pratt seems to clarify or correct the information from his 1870 quotation.

1883 George Q. Cannon

He becomes the first LDS author to extensively quote scholarly sources regarding the conditions in the Hadramaut that might resemble Bountiful.

The direction in which they traveled after the death of Ishmael is that which would lead a company to-day into the most fertile region in Arabia. One traveler in speaking of a region, if not that called by Lehi and his company Bountiful, certainly adjoining it, says:

"As we crossed these [open fields] with lofty almond, citron and orange trees, yielding a delicious fragrance on either hand, exclamations of astonishment and admiration burst from us. Is this Arabia? we said: this the country we had looked on heretofore a desert? Verdant fields of grain and sugar cane,

stretching along for miles, are before us; streams of water flowing in all direction, intersect our path; and the happy and contented appearance of the peasants agreeable helps to fill up the smiling picture. The atmosphere was delightfully clear and pure; and as we trotted joyously along, giving or returning the salutation of peace or welcome, I could almost fancy I had reached that 'Araby the blest,' which I had been accustomed to regard as existing only in the fictions of our poets." (Travels in Arabia, Vol 1, pp. 115, 116.)

1888 George Reynolds

" . . . keeping near the eastern shore of the Red Sea. . . . The journey continued for a long time. . . . Ishmael died at a place called Nahom. . . . From this time the compass changed the course of their travel and they journeyed almost directly eastward. This must have taken them across the peninsula of Arabia to its eastern coast."

1888 B. H. Roberts

"For several years they wandered through the wilderness of Arabia, until they came to the coasts of the Arabian Sea."

1888 "Hagoth"

"The caravan route to-day after leaving Akabah leaves the gulf and passes to the left of a mountain parallel to it for a distance of about one hundred miles, where it again comes nearer the sea at a point where the gulf and sea unite. From this point to the ocean the mountains are from ten to forty miles distant from the sea. The intervening space is a barren sandy plain, with here and there an oasis or fertile spot, caused by the little streams which rise in the mountains but are lost in the sands as soon as they reach the plain. The route follows closely the base of the mountain until it reaches about the 21o north latitude where it branches, one part turning to the east to the table-land to Mecca, and the other continuing on about one hundred and forty miles or more to where a valley opens towards the east through which it passes to the table-land and crosses Arabia just south of the great desert."

[Note* In this article, for the very first time, we find a more detailed correlation of Lehi's journey from Jerusalem to the Promised land with the known historical world of Lehi's time. This is the first time a specific route for Lehi has been coordinated with a historical trail or caravan trails. If I can interpret correctly (seeing that no map has been provided here), the trail described above would run along the eastern coast of the Red Sea until it reached 21o north latitude which would be the approximate location today of the city of Jeddah. From there one branch would supposedly turn eastward to go inland a short distance to reach Mecca. The other route would continue on down the coast for about 150 miles to the present city of Al Qunfidhah. Here the trail would turn inland (starting about 19o north latitude) ascending the mountain range through a valley to the other side (or "table land") and then continuing on southward until it reached the southwestern border of the Rub Al Khali or great desert.

From here the trail would turn eastward skirting the southern border of the great desert until it reached present day Oman.

What is significant here is that this historical caravan route would not be mentioned, commented upon, or followed for another 52 years (see the 1940 Joel Ricks notation and map), then 10 more years would go by before Hugh Nibley provided any details (see the 1950 notation and map), and beyond that it would take 26 more years before the Hiltons actually traveled the route (see the 1976 notation and map).]

Continuing on:

"The Nephites journeyed in the most fertile parts of the desert for the reason that it was there they found water and [food]. We are told that game is still abundant around these wadis, or fertile spots, where they collect to find food, water and shelter from the burning heat of a tropical sun.

The Prophet Joseph tells us that after reaching the 19^o north latitude Lehi's company turned eastward and crossed Arabia to the Indian Ocean. It would have been almost an impossibility to have crossed north of this point, as the whole of central Arabia presents a barren, uninhabitable desert without water or vegetation. A crossing even at this point named [19 degrees north latitude] is very difficult, and long marches are to be made without water."

[Note* This is the first time since the 1836 Lehi's Travels statement that the specific mention of 19 degrees north latitude is mentioned. It is interesting that the author ("Hagoth") proposes the idea that north of 19 degrees an easterly crossing would have been impossible whereas at 19 degrees it was possible. Just how far north he had in mind is unknown. In the 1898, 1910 RLDS commentary we have a proposed easterly route starting at about 23 degrees (see the 1819 notation for a map of an actual historic route along this latitude)

"Nephi tells us that they suffered much from hunger, thirst and fatigue, which would be a natural outcome of such a journey at the present time.

Nephi describes the country where they reached the sea as a very rich and productive region, a land abounding in fruits, honey and game in abundance, for this reason they named it Bountiful.

This region to-day is rich in almost everything that could gladden the heart of man. Fruits of almost every variety grow profusely. Wild honey is plentiful. Fish are so numerous on the coast that they are caught by the cart loads and used to enrich the soil. It is known everywhere as the Frankincense Country, and is truly a bountiful land.

[Note* This part of Arabia was known from ancient times as Arabia Felix or Happy Arabia due to the fertile land. Unlike future authors who seemed to feel that Arabia was unknown to the modern world, the author Hagoth understood this part of Arabia.]

1891 George Reynolds

" . . . 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 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. . .

Note* There is a big difference between traveling "nearly east" and "almost directly east" from the 19th degree of north latitude. "Directly east" leads across The Empty Quarter.

BOUNTIFUL, LAND OF (In Arabia) . . . It was a portion of Arabia Felix, or Arabia the happy, so called in contradistinction to Arabia the stony, and Arabia the desert, on account of its abundant productiveness and great fertility. It was in this blessed region, on the shore of the Arabian sea, that Nephi built the ship that carried Lehi's colony to the promised land. . . .

1898 RLDS Committee

"By consulting a map of Asia, and noting the direction traveled by the company . . . it will be observed at once that "Bountiful" could not have been elsewhere than on the southeastern shore of Arabia, on the Gulf of Oman. The Red Sea lies in a south, southeast direction, hence they followed closely along its borders for a long distance, and then moved nearly eastward from that time forth. This directions would keep them south of the Persian Gulf, and there was no chance of passing to the north of it. That point seems clear. . . .

In conclusion, the committee is aware that it has not produced a perfect map. It is reasonably certain, however, that the general outlines are correct, and that no future inquiry will be able to move them:

1. That the Nephites, after leaving Jerusalem, passed down along the eastern coast of the Red Sea, until near the Tropic of Cancer [approx. 23.5o degrees north latitude], and then crossed Arabia to the east, and landed in the country now known as Oman, on the Gulf of Oman, from which point they crossed the ocean, probably by going eastward."

[Note* There are no modern roads leading eastward exactly along the Tropic of Cancer. However, if one turns eastward "near" or just north of the Tropic of Cancer there is a road that travels eastward through the city of Medina and eastward through the city of Riyadh until it reaches the coast near

modern-day country of Qatar on the Arabian Gulf. The road then runs eastward along the coast through the present-day United Arab Emirates until it reaches the coast of the Gulf of Oman and arrives in the coastal shipping port-city of Muscat in Oman.] (For evidence that this route existed anciently see the map in the notation for 1819)

1899 James E. Talmage

"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"

1900 George Reynolds

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

"Irreantum-- The name given by Lehi's colony to an arm of the Indian Ocean on the eastern coast of Arabia."

1903 B. H. Roberts

"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."

1904 Joel Ricks

"On page 289 of the Compendium, we find . . . they came to the nineteenth degree of north latitude; then, nearly east to the Sea of Arabia"

1906 S. W. L. Scott

Note* This author was the first to specifically detail the fertility--plants, fruits, spices, minerals-- of the southern end of the Arabian peninsula.

1909 B. H. Roberts

"Lehi's Colony -- . . . 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."

1909 B. H. Roberts

"The only reason so far discovered for regarding the [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. . . . 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.

Yet this alleged "revelation" has dominated all our thinking, and influenced all our conclusions upon the subject of Book of Mormon geography.

1909[^] Alvin Knisley

Boun'ti-ful, Land of.-- In Arabia. On the coast of the Indian Ocean, in the Asiatic continent. . . .

Ir're-an'tum-- Name given by Lehi's company to the waters on the east coast of Arabia . . .

1910 [RLDS Comm. on Archaeology](#)

By consulting a map of Asia, and noting the direction traveled by the company, as cited above, it will be observed at once that "Bountiful" could not have been elsewhere than on the southeastern shore of Arabia, on the Gulf of Oman. (See the 1898 notation.)

1910 Samuel W. Traum

Note* After quoting the references in the Book of Mormon for Lehi's

travels, Traum attacks the idea of a river. He then attacks the location of the Persian Gulf as the Sea of Irreantum for its lack of mountains and ore. He writes: " Equally difficult of solution is the problem in topography that the Mormon must solve when he takes the eastern side of Arabia, and compare it with the teachings of the Book of Mormon. Here we are not so much at loss to decide upon a given locality; for the Mormons have themselves held it to be near the head of the Persian Gulf, and that the Persian Gulf is the Sea of Irreantum. They locate the shipbuilding enterprise on the Arabian side of the gulf. That, of course, brings it into the territory of El Hasa."

Note* EL Hasa is located on the 25th degree north latitude. While George Reynolds proposed the Sea of Irreantum to be the Persian Gulf (which he later clarified and modified), I have been unable to locate any LDS sources previous to this anti-Mormon book that proposed Irreantum to be "near the

head of the Persian Gulf." While the 1898 RLDS Committee report has Lehi turning eastward "near the Tropic of Cancer (about 23.5 degrees north latitude), they also say that "he landed in the country now known as Oman, on the Gulf of Oman."

1915 James E. Talmage

"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"

1915 Janne Sjodahl

"They came, first, to the Red Sea, and then, after having followed its shore line for many days, took up their journey in an easterly direction and came to the Arabian gulf. Here they constructed a vessel, embarked, and were carried across the Indian and Pacific oceans"

1919 James E. Talmage

"The migrating colony journeyed by slow stages for about eight years in the desert, . . . Eventually they reached the shores of the Arabian sea"

Chronological Summary of Proposed Landing Sites for Lehi

Note* New descriptive words relative to Lehi's landing will be bolded. Major authoritative pronouncements will be italicized.

1830 P.P. Pratt, O. Cowdery, P. Whitmer, Jr., Z. Peterson Frederick G. Williams

"the coast of Chili" [See the "Note*" in the 1830 notation]

1832 Mormon missionaries

"on the coast of South America"

1832 Orson Pratt, Lyman Johnston

"he came across the water into South America."

1836 Frederick G. Williams

"on the continent of South America in Chili, thirty degrees south latitude." [See the "Note*" in the 1836 notation]

[1840 Orson Pratt](#)

"upon the western coast of South America"

[1841 Benjamin Winchester](#)

"on the western coast of South America"

[1841 Charles Thompson](#)

"in South America"

[1842 John Taylor or Joseph Smith](#)

"a little south of the Isthmus of Darien" [See "Note*" in the 1842 notation]

[1842 J. B. Turner](#) (anti-Mormon)

"To this end, they [Mormons] refer to Jacob's blessing on the seed of Joseph, Genesis xlix. ver. 22-26. In order to interpret and apply this passage literally, they make Joseph's bough, "running over the wall," (verse 22) to mean the progenitors of the American Indians crossing the Atlantic ocean to this country. The Atlantic ocean is therefore the literal wall.

[1848 John E. Page](#)

"on the Pacific side of the southern part of Central America"

[See "Note*" in the 1848 notation]

[1851 Parley P. Pratt](#)

"on the western coast of America, within the bounds of what is now called 'Chili'"

[1855 Parley P. Pratt](#)

"on the coast of what is now called Chile, in South America"

[1864-5 \(Lehi's Travels\)](#)

Ezra Williams lends the Frederick G. Williams manuscripts (including the Lehi's Travels statement) to the LDS Church

[See the discussion notes in the 1836 notation]

[1865 Jos. F. Smith note](#)

"on the continent of South America in Chili, 30 degrees south latitude"

[See "Note*" in the 1865 notation]

[1866 Orson Pratt](#)

"on the Western coast of South America, not far from where now stands the city of Valparaiso, in Chili"

[See "Note*" in the 1866 notation] Valparaiso is situated at 33 degrees south latitude.

[1868 George A. Smith](#)

"on the west coast of Chili, near the place where Valparaiso now stands"

[1870 Orson Pratt](#)

"on the western coast of South America"

[1871 Orson Pratt](#)

"on the south-west coast of South America"

[1872 Orson Pratt](#)

"on the western coast of what is now called South America . . . in Chili, not far from where the city of Valparaiso now stands"

[1872 H. A. Stebbins](#)

"in South America"

[1873 William H. Kelley](#)

"upon the coast of Central or South America"

[1873 Orson Pratt](#)

"landing on the western coast of South America."

[1874 Orson Pratt](#)

"on the western coast of South America"

[1876 Orson Pratt](#)

"on the western coast of South America, no far, as is believed, from the thirtieth degree of south latitude"

[1876 George M. Ottinger](#)

"on the western coast of South America, somewhere, we infer, near the present city of Lima in Peru"

Note* This information was printed in the Church's Juvenile Instructor. This is the first time that this location (Peru) had been proposed for Lehi's landing. The location of Lima, Peru is approximately 12 degrees south latitude.

1879 John Bernhisel

Bernhisel lends his book (with his last-page Lehi's Travels statement) to the LDS Church to copy for the first time.

[See the discussion notes in the 1845 notation]

1879 James A. Little

"We have a tradition among us that the Prophet Joseph Smith said that they landed in the country now known as Chile, on the western coast of South America. Their subsequent history gives evidence of the correctness of this tradition. They pitched their tents and began to cultivate the earth. They planted the seeds they had brought from their native land, from which they gathered a bountiful harvest.

Note* One might jump to the conclusion here that because the seeds grew, and the seeds were from Lehi's native land of Jerusalem (situated at close to 30o north latitude), then the only place that could accommodate the growth of the seeds would have to be located at the same latitude, either 30o north latitude or 30o south latitude (in Chile). One might further speculate that this information was based loosely on the Lehi's Travels statement. Going further, because Little mentions that "we have a tradition among us that the Prophet Joseph Smith said that they landed in the country now known as Chile, on the western coast of South America" all the evidence might seem to add up to a Joseph Smith connection to the Lehi's Travels statement. However, no effort is made here to specify any latitudes, either in the description of Lehi's travels across Arabia or at his landing site in South America. Nor is any effort made to verify whether or not seeds from Jerusalem could grow at other latitudes along the coast of South America or Central America. In the context of Little's comments, the planting of seeds had nothing to do with latitude but was just the fulfillment of the Book of Mormon story in which it mentions that Lehi's party had brought seeds with them to the land of promise. Nevertheless, this seems to be the first time that anyone has directly linked the Prophet Joseph Smith with the idea that Lehi's party landed "in the country now known as Chile, on the western coast of South America."

1879 Orson Pratt (footnotes)

"on the coast of Chili, S. America"

Note* The fact that these footnotes would be published with the text of the Book of Mormon is significant, but whether this was considered "official" approval by the Church at that time is unknown. (see 1920)

1880 George Reynolds

"it is generally believed among the Latter-day Saints to have been on the coast of Chili. In fact it is widely understood that the Lord so informed the Prophet Joseph Smith"

Note* This comment that "the Lord so informed the Prophet Joseph Smith" that Lehi's landing site was "on the coast of Chili" comes just one year after the 1879 James A. Little comment (see notation). It is the first time such information was attributed to a revelation from the Lord to Joseph. Other than the Little commentary, one would have to wonder just what prompted George Reynolds to think that these ideas were "widely understood," but more importantly, what made him feel that this information came from a "revelation." and why he could feel confident in publishing such ideas in a Church sponsored magazine.

[1880 Heber Comer/Karl Maeser](#)

map location a little north of 300 south latitude

[1882 James A Little](#)

"Revelation to Joseph the Seer . . . on the continent of South America

[Franklin D. Richards](#)

in Chili, thirty degrees south latitude"

Note* This information was added by the authors without any documented support.

[1883 George Q. Cannon](#)

He had brought them safely across the mighty breadth of ocean which extended from the coast of Arabia to the coast of what is now called South America, or as they, with good reason, called it, "The Promised Land." The prophet Joseph, in speaking of their place of landing, said (note*) it was on the coast of the country now known as Chili-a country which possesses a genial, temperate and healthy climate.

Note* Cannon notes the Lehi's Travels statement.

[1884 Thomas W. Smith](#)

"as is supposed, in Peru, South America"

[1884 J. R. F.](#)

"on the coast of South America somewhere near Cobiga, the sea port of Bolivia"

Note* This is the first and possibly only source I can find for this idea that Lehi landed "near Cobiga, the sea port of Bolivia." The author does not include any other details in this article as to why he chooses this location.

[1886 A. H. Cannon](#)

"On the coast of Chili in South America"

[1886? ??? \(Plain Facts\)](#)

Unclear (probably in Chile)

[1887 George Q. Cannon](#)

Among our own people there is considerable anxiety manifested to identify the sites of the ancient cities of the Nephites and to locate the exact spots where the stirring scenes described in the Book of Mormon were enacted. There are a few points which can be identified. . . . [point #3] It is also known that the landing place of Lehi and his family was near what is now known as the city of Valparaiso, in the Republic of Chili."near what is now known as the city of Valparaiso, in the Republic of Chili"

Note* The revelatory material attributed to the Prophet Joseph Smith is now enlarged to include "Valparaiso."

[1888 George Reynolds](#)

"it is generally believed among the Latter-day Saints to have been on the coast of Chili in thirty degrees south latitude. In fact, the Prophet Joseph Smith so stated. . . . For all we know a huge mountain may now cover the spot, or it may be hidden beneath the blue waters of the Pacific, scores of miles away from any present landing place.

[1888 B. H. Roberts](#)

"on the west coast of South America, 30 degrees south latitude"

[1888 "Hagoth"](#)

"on the coast of Chili, South America, . . . at that point where the great Antarctic current first sets in close shore." . . . The Prophet Joseph located the landing of Lehi's company at the 300 south latitude, on the coast of Chili. Examining the map of that country we find a point of land extending out to sea, there, just north of which is a bay known as Coquimbo. As this is the only sheltered spot from some distance up or down the coast, we conclude that this was the place of landing."

[1888 Lyman Littlefield](#)

"on the coast of Chili, in South America"

[1889 John H. Kelson](#)

(He quotes The Compendium regarding Lehi's travels)

[1889 B. H. Roberts](#)

"on the west coast of South America, thirty degrees south latitude"

[1890 George Q. Cannon](#)

"the Book of Mormon is not a geographical primer. It was not written to teach geographical truths"

[1891 John H. Kelson](#)

"in Chile, on the west coast of South America"

[1891 George Reynolds](#)

"at a place, we are told by the Prophet Joseph Smith, near where the city of Valparaiso, Chili, now stands. . . . We are told by the prophet Joseph Smith that Lehi . . . landed on the continent of South America, in Chili, thirty degrees south latitude"

[1893-4 H. E. Baker](#)

landed at the thirtieth parallel of south latitude on the western coast of South America.

[1894 H. A. Stebbins](#)

"upon the west coast of Peru. We do not know exactly where, but in that region" (Note* Although the original lectures were given in 1894, they were revised before publishing in 1901. This information might have been added at that time.)

[1894 J. V. Bluth](#)

"miraculously guided to the western coast of South America"

[1898 RLDS Committee](#)

"upon the west coast of South America on the coast of Chili" . . . Neither are we certain that the Nephites landed as far south on the coast of Chili as the thirtieth parallel of latitude. . . . there was an inviting landing place favorable for settlement five or six degrees to the north of the thirtieth parallel just south of the desert of Atacama, and that the landing place was there. [Antofagasta, Chile]

[1899 James Talmage](#)

"the western coast of South America"

[1899 James Talmage](#)

"the western coast of South America, whereon they landed (590 B.C.) probably somewhere near the site of the present city of Valparaiso in Chile.

[1900 William Woodhead](#)

"south of the equator on the west coast"

[1900 George Reynolds](#)

[No Statement--unlike previous publications]

[1901 H. A. Stebbins](#)

"upon the west coast of Peru. We do not know exactly where, but in that region"

[1901 James Talmage](#)

"on the western shores of South America near the spot now marked by the city of Valparaiso"

[1902 RLDS Committee](#)

[see the 1898 notation]

[1902 William H. Kelley](#)

upon the west coast of South America, not far from the territory now known as Chile or Peru. . . . Peru is the identical spot, or nearly so . . . that the colony of Nephites landed.

[1903 Walter Wolfe](#)

"on the west coast of South America"

[1903 B. H. Roberts](#)

"on the continent of South America, in about thirty degrees south latitude"

[1904 Joel Ricks](#)

[quotes the Compendium (Lehi's Travels) statement]

[1906 W. E. Peak](#)

in South America, on the western shore

[1906 Joel Ricks](#)

"near Valparaiso"

[1907 Fred B. Farr](#)

upon the western coast of South America.

[1909 B. H. Roberts](#)

"I may say also that as these pages go to press the question of Book of Mormon geography is more than ever recognized as an open one by students of the book. That is to say, it is a question if Mormon views hitherto entertained respecting Book of Mormon lands have not been a misconception by reason of

premises forced upon its students by the declaration of an alleged revelation. In a compendium of doctrinal subjects, published by the late Elders Franklin D. Richards and James A. Little, the following item appears: [the Lehi's Travels statement is then quoted]

The only reason so far discovered for regarding the [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, . . . Yet this alleged 'revelation' has dominated all our thinking, and influenced all our conclusions upon the subject of Book of Mormon geography. . . . If the investigation now going on shall result in relieving us of the necessity of considering ourselves bound to uphold as a revelation the passage in Richards and Little's Compendium, here considered, many of our difficulties as to the geography of the Book of Mormon--if not all of them in fact, will have passed away. In that event much found in this treatise of the Book of Mormon relative to the Nephites being in South America . . . will have to be modified.

[1909 Alvin Knisley](#)

[In South America](#)

[1910 RLDS Committee](#)

"upon the west coast of South America on the coast of Chili" . . . Neither are we certain that the Nephites landed as far south on the coast of Chili as the thirtieth parallel of latitude. . . . there was an inviting landing place favorable for settlement five or six degrees to the north of the thirtieth parallel just south of the desert of Atacama, and that the landing place was there. [Antofagasta, Chile]

[1911 Vincy Barker](#)

(according to Richards' and Little's 1882 Compendium--Chile, 30 degrees south latitude)

[1913 Alvin R. Ellis](#)

on the western coast of South America, or Chile.

[1914 James Talmage](#)

"on the western shores of South America probably somewhere in Chile"

[1915 James Talmage](#)

"the western coast of South America"

[1915 Janne Sjodahl](#)

"were carried across the Indian and Pacific oceans to the western coast of South America."

[1916 Joel Ricks](#)

"on the western coast of South America in northern Chili"

[1916 J. A. Gunsolley](#)

"western coast of South America, about thirty degrees south latitude"

[1917 Bert Sumsion](#)

"on the west coast of South America, near Chile"

[1917 Curtis Clark](#)

"on this continent on the Peruvian portion of the coast of South America"

[1917 L. E. Hills](#)

"on the west coast of Central America . . . in La Union Bay, on the west side of the Gulf of Fonseca"

[1918 Joseph F. Smith](#)

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 . . .

[1919 Ralph Farrell](#)

"Central America is the place where the Nephites landed"

[1919 Nephi Jensen](#)

The salient historical incidents connected with this migration, as recorded in First Nephi are as follows: (1) That the four sons of Lehi, who left Jerusalem, 600 B.C., were the chief figures in the colonization of South America (1 Nephi 2-3); . . . Both Nephi and Joyce designate the land which the colony set sail for as the "promised land." "Ayar was the last to perish; he had developed wings, and when the travelers came to sight of their promised land, his brother bade him fly to the top of the hill, where afterwards stood the great Sun-temple, and take possession" (1b 79) [Pachacamac near Lima, Peru]

[1919 James Talmage](#)

"the western coast of South America"

[191? Willard Young](#)

Lehi's group landed in the Gulf of Fonseca

[1920 LDS Committee](#)

Orson Pratt's footnote, "Believed to be on the coast of Chile South America," is eliminated from the 1920 edition of the Book of Mormon