



Why in Central America?

By Mike Brown © 2019

As members of the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team, we have been traveling to Mexico and Central America for the past 18 years doing research on archaeological sites including Mayan and Olmec sites. Building on the work of Neil Steede, and with Neil's help and oversight, we have also investigated, taken measurements and noted observations of the terrain and altitude of various sites. On almost every expedition, we have been overwhelmed by the confirmations we collect to support the Book of Mormon story. We have found ourselves continually "blown away" by information that goes beyond what we read in the Book of Mormon. Remember the comments from Mormon and Moroni? We are only reading "an hundredth part" of what is contained in the records, so we are missing 99% of the details in the Book of Mormon. In many cases, the Book of Mormon only provides a recitation of the facts of what happened without any explanation of "why" something happened the way

it did. In so many cases, it is through archaeology that we find the links to explain various events that occurred in the stories of the Book of Mormon.

Before I get into this, I want to express my conviction that it is not about *where* the Book of Mormon stories took place; whether it was in the northern area of the United States or whether it took place in Central America makes no difference. The importance of the Book of Mormon is that it tells a story of God's compassion and His desire to guide and direct His people as they walked their walk thousands of years ago (5000 years ago with the Jaredites and 2500 years ago with the Nephites/Lamanites). It is also important because it testifies that Jesus was born, ministered to the people, was crucified on the cross, was entombed, and the most important part is that He rose to live again. Not only did He leave that testimony in the Old World with his apostles and many eyewitnesses, but he also descended from Heaven to visit the New World, the Americas.

Continues on Page 2

Anticipating Cumorah's Gifts

by David B. Brown © 2019

The anticipation is mounting as the project begins to develop for a dig at Cumorah. What will be found there? Is there any evidence that this is the place where Mormon and Moroni abridged the library of Nephite records onto a set of plates that was finally buried in a hill in New York?

Having identified the Maya site of Yaxchilan as the City of Zarahemla, we know from Mormon's description of the battles taking place, that the Lamanites swept from south to north through the land of Zarahemla, pushing the Nephites northward into the City of Desolation. We have identified LaVenta as the City of Desolation. All of this fits Mormon's geographic implications.

After holding firm at the City of Desolation, the Nephites are pushed northward again, through the pass at

the narrow neck of land which we have identified as the narrow crest of land rising above the swampland between the Tonalá River and the Coat-zacoalcos River. Here Mormon records the barbaric practices of the Lamanites who sacrifice captured Nephite women and children. It is the Maya site of Acayucan where archaeologists discovered burials of children who had been hung on ropes that pierced their jaws and ran through the

Continues on Page 7

Inside this issue:

Why in Central America? <i>Cont.</i>	2, 3, & 4
Adventures in Archaeology	5 & 6
Anticipating Cumorah's Gifts <i>Cont.</i>	7
Another Experience on the Hill	8

Why in Central America? *continued*

During his stay with His sheep in the Americas, He expressed His love for all people again and again. There are beautiful testimonies in the Book of Mormon of how Jesus wants to be a part of all of our lives, wants to be there for us in our time of need and wants us to be able to call on Him at any time. That is what is important.

The foregoing testimony of Jesus being expressed, I do want to be very clear about the impact of geography if only to confirm Jesus Christ through the Book of Mormon stories. I believe that the “nature of God” and the “relationship of Jesus to mankind” is much more clearly expressed in the Book of Mormon than in the Bible. It is not a different message; the messages as previously stated, are the same. To me the Book of Mormon provides clarity. I want to be very clear so that even I can understand what I am trying to express here. If a particular geographic theory is delivered to the masses of any denomination from any walk of Christianity and people commit to it, understand it, and build their faith on that information, and then the evidence of it



falls apart, my fear is that more people will fall away from belief in the Book of Mormon because of failing geographic theories. It would have been better if they never heard the theory in the first place. For that reason, I want to illustrate

some of the conflicts in the two pre-dominate theories.

The two theories to which I am referring are the Central America theory and the Heartland theory. One proposes that the story of the Book of Mormon took place in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras; in essence, the ancient Maya being the Nephite and Lamanite people. The Heartland Theory states that the Book of Mormon took place in the Heartland of the United States—that the history of the early Restoration church from western New York to the Central Plains of the USA are the geographic locations of the Book of Mormon lands and people.

First, the evidence is beginning to indicate that most of the Native Americans (Indians) are descendants of Lamanites and many are descendants of converted Ammonites. The Book of Mormon story of Hagoth talks about taking many thousands of men with their wives and children to a land northward. Over the course of a few years prior to the time of Christ they took several shiploads and the book states that many others traveled north-

ward. While I believe that most of the Indian nations located in the USA are descendants of Nephites and Lamanites, including Ammonites, the USA is not the location of the Book of Mormon story. They were tertiary to it in that we have the very brief passage of Hagoth taking many thousands northward. We believe Hagoth departed from the Zarahemla region by way of the Sidon river which is the present-day Usumacinta River in Mexico. We believe they departed by ship just west of the Yucatán peninsula near the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and entered the mouth of the Mississippi River. Since they were river traveling people, we ex-

pect that their dispersion would have been by way of the Mississippi River traveling northward into the heartland of the present-day United States utilizing the tributaries of the Arkansas, Missouri and Ohio Rivers.

While there are glaring holes in the Heartland theory such as no major metropolitan cities or communities of cities in any of the North American regions encompassed by the Heartland theory, we do find areas of mound building. When we look at what we believe is Lamanite construction (mostly in the highlands of Guatemala), we see a predominance of mound building and earthen works. The Nephites were stone builders. We see vast numbers of cities and areas with city connections, huge highway systems, and interrelationships between many of the cities in Mexico and Guatemala. With the advents of LiDAR imaging, we now know there were millions of inhabitants in the Mexico/Guatemala region. Since many of the inhabitants that departed Central America and Mexico to inhabit North America were the converted Lamanites known as Ammonites, we expect their primary constructions to be mound building which is primarily what we find in North America.

It seems to me that in order to place the Book of Mormon stories in North America, one has to do so many contortions in attempting to make the geography work that I don't see it as a reasonable or workable theory. For instance, there are no major cities, there are no stories written by the natives—stone or otherwise. Yet we know the Nephites had language and wrote many important messages. They tell us that they did. Remember that Mosiah did not include the Mulekite King list in his record, but he wrote it in other places? Mosiah was not in line to be king of Zarahemla - he was an outsider -

Continues on Page 3

Why in Central America? *continued*

yet they appointed him King. How does this happen? (We know by archeology how and why it happened, but this is part of the 99% that they chose not to include in the Book of Mormon.) It was important that Mosiah show respect and honor the prior Kings of the Mulekite people as they were heirs to the throne because they were the descendants of Zedekiah. There is a staircase at Yaxchilan that has a King list and it is Yaxchilan that fits the City of Zarahemla with remarkable accuracy, including a glyph of the name “Zarahemla” clearly illustrated in the city glyph as a “Seed of Sadness”. You would expect the King list to be written prominently in that city and here it is on the huge, central staircase going up to the temples. Both archeologists and epigraphers say the list of names is the King list.



The Hieroglyphic Staircase #3 at Yaxchilan which matches the Book of Mormon King list for Zarahemla.

Another fact concerning Yaxchilan is that in the 1980s, after doing excavations at the site, Mario Perez Campa, an archeologist working at Yaxchilan, was describing to Neil Steede what he had learned about Yaxchilan (Zarahemla). He

stated that a most peculiar thing happened. (This was unsolicited commentary.) The city went from a Kingdom where a King ruled to some type of government like shared rule or judges. Neil asked how Mario knew this to be the case and he took Neil to the place where the throne had been fitted from a single (1) ruler to 5 chairs (stone seats). He assumed that something had changed in the culture or city that went from a monarchy to some form of judgeship because you can't have five concurrent kings. This is the story of Zarahemla and we know that the four sons of Mosiah all turned down the throne to take the gospel to their brothers the Lamanites which resulted in a huge success in the highlands of southern Mexico and Guatemala. The sons of Mosiah grieved for their souls after the experience with the angel and could do nothing else.

We have hundreds of these incredible events that mirror Book of Mormon stories. For instance, on another trip, we were exploring the site of Tonina. This is the Book of Mormon city of Ammonihah that starved Alma and Amulek. While at the site, we came upon a stone recovered from the site that illustrated two men, skin and bones, with wrists tied with cords laying on a stone floor. As we toured the site, a groundskeeper told us that the prison had collapsed anciently, but for some reason it had never been rebuilt. We asked about the rest of site; had it also suffered extreme damage similar to the prison. “No” was the response, “only the prison.” He did not know why it was not rebuilt after it occurred. It collapsed anciently, but had not been rebuilt. On and on, story after amazing story.

I understand the strong desire to have the Nephites in “our country”

(USA). We know that there are blessing that were given to this land “above all others” etc. We have modern borders that demarcate different countries, but at the time when the Jaredites and the Nephites were given a beautiful blessing for “this land”, there was no border. For sure, we can argue that God would have known, but from a pile of thousands of events known to have happened and writings that exist today that were written thousands of years ago, we truly believe with assurance that the Book of Mormon story took place in Central America and Mexico.

I want to comment briefly about the new Annotated Edition of the Book of Mormon. I love the book for the quality of the writing, for the incredible information about Native Americans and their cultures. There are even red letters for quoted passages from God, etc, but the Book of Mormon geography is not archaeologically correct and unfortunately, this publication is heavily laden with geography.

Another serious failing of the Heartland theory is that it puts the mound where Joseph recovered the gold plates as the Hill Cumorah that houses the full library. I know that this is a prevalent thought among Restoration brothers and sisters but it taxes geographic logic. When Moroni took the set of gold plates and escaped Cumorah, he did so looking over his shoulder, very concerned about the dangers of the approaching Lamanites. Moroni states that they would destroy the records and kill him. So, to then say that Moroni returned to the Hill Cumorah to bury the plates is not reasonable. He traveled northward from Hill Cumorah (located in Mexico), and may have taken a land route around the Gulf of Mexico to reach the Mississippi River basin, then could have easily taken a Mississippi River route up the Ohio, preaching and teaching as he went.

Continues on Page 4

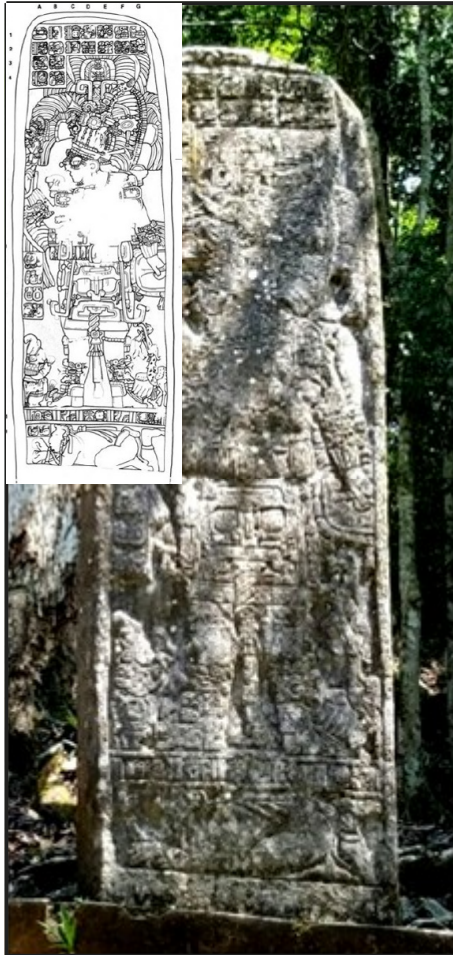
Why in Central America? *continued*

Since Moroni knew of the departure of Nephite and Ammonite groups that had traveled northward, we theorize that he may have felt somewhat safe since they would also understand the importance of the records he was carrying and he would thereby gain safe passage.

Another thing, Joseph Smith Jr. never said that he was going to the Hill Cumorah to collect the gold plates or to check on the gold plates for four years. He never said that the hill from which the gold plates came was the same Cumorah that housed all of the records. The angel Moroni never calls the mound from which Joseph received the plates Cumorah. It seems as though it would have been part of their conversation, yet the historical record makes no mention of it as such.

I want to share a brief testimony of what God does for us from time to time. We were on an expedition to Guatemala in 2017. One of our goals was to see if we could discover the battle location where the Lamanites were attacked by the Nephites as they were crossing the river Sidon. We know the Lamanites were marching from Jershon into the Land of Manti to cross the Sidon at its headwaters in an effort to attack the Nephites. The details of the pincher movement by the Nephites to counter the attack aren't important at this time, but we know it took place in Manti, by the headwaters of the river Sidon. So, we were investigating that area in Guatemala. On that trip, we didn't find the point of crossing, BUT we found the place where Ammon approached Alma II to ask for safety for the converted Lamanites which would later be referred to as Ammonites. It was a truly astonishing moment. We were in the heat of jungle, hot, sweaty, exhausted and all of a sudden we see these huge stelas that show a captive in bondage (he is captive, bound to his sacred bonds to never lift arms to fight or kill any type of enemy) ask-

ing for protection and that protection being offered as shown by a shield not in a defensive position but in reverse so as to say, "I am



Dos Pilas Stela # 14 indicating the desire to protect the new converts who are now captives to their sacred bonds.

open and offering to protect you." This was in Manti, right where it originally took place.

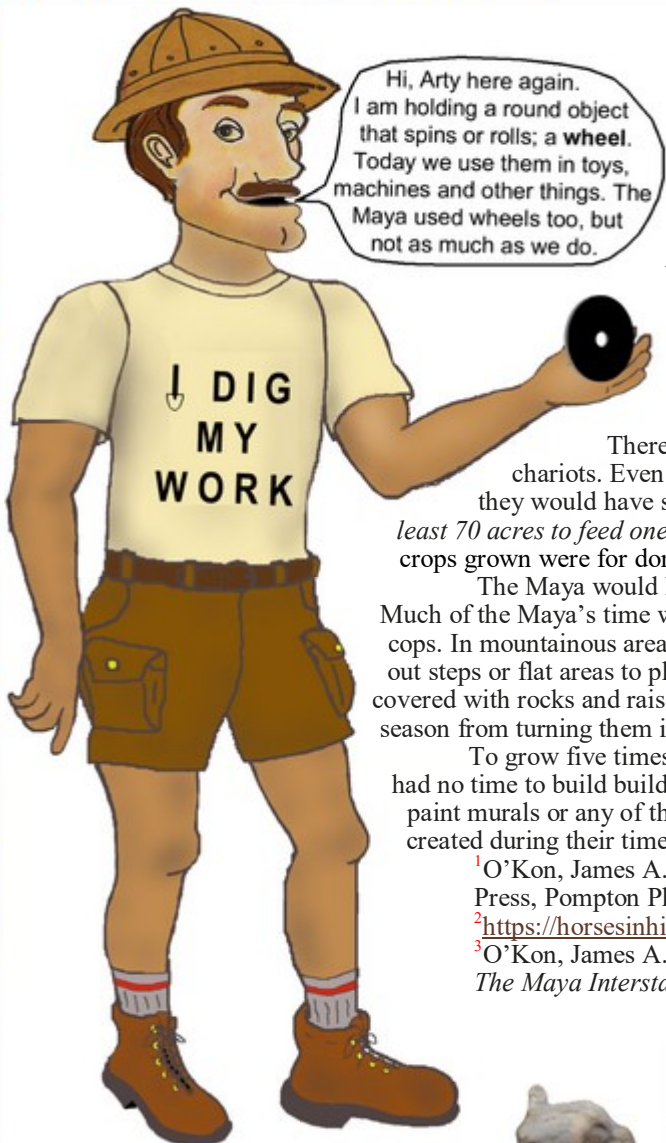
We read these kind of stories all over the Nephite/Lamanite lands of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Belize. We know where Aaron cut off the arms of the bandits who tried to steal King Lamoni's flocks. There is a statue, on site, that shows a person with his hand cut off at the wrist. The statue is beautifully crafted and it is made with the arm severed just above the wrist. And it is right where it is supposed to be.

Do you remember the story in

the Book of Mormon about the Lamanites being clothed in animal skin coats and pants to protect themselves against the harsh winters as they prepared for battle? Do you recall the beaver pelt moccasins to protect against walking miles over snow and ice to go to battle to defeat the Nephite army at Zarahemla? Do you remember the battle that needed to pause to await a bitter snow storm that had totally closed down travel between cities, making treks to do battle impossible? Neither do I. All descriptions of Lamanite garb is that they wore loincloth and nothing more; shirtless, pant-less and shoeless; naked except for a loincloth. There is never a mention of a growing season such as a time to plant and a time to harvest as in seasons of the year. In the warm areas of southern Mexico and Central America, the growing season and harvesting season is 12 months per year. Sometimes it is not what is said, but what is not mentioned that screams the loudest.

The stories in the Book of Mormon were the Nephite's most important stories and they wanted us to know they were true; that they actually happened, no joke. These were their most important stories to share with one another and they were also teaching tools for bringing up their young ones and for teaching new entrants into their communities so they were written on stone where they occurred.

As a young boy, I had heard the stories in the Book of Mormon and now we read them in the glyphs and artwork all over the ancient ruins of Central America. If you are interested in the evidences, a huge cache of findings and writings, I would suggest that you might want to visit our website at HCETI.ORG and then click on David Brown's 16 videos that explain the evidences of the people, places and things that confirm that the land just to the south of us in Central America is the Book of Mormon Lands.



The Wheel and the Maya

“Maya technology understood the principle of the wheel, using them on toys, [see photos below] but the wheel was not viable (practical) for use on carts”¹

We have found little evidence that they used wheels for anything but toys. After all these years only a few full sized wheels have been found, and these were made of stone. [see photos below] Maybe the Maya made other wheels of wood that rotted long ago, but we will never know.

There were few, if any, draft animals to pull carts, wagons or chariots. Even if they had enough animals, like oxen, horses or mules, they would have struggled to grow enough crops to feed them. *“it took at least 70 acres to feed one (Mayan) family.”²* In the US in 1931, 80 percent of the crops grown were for domesticated animals.³

The Maya would have had to clear much more land to feed their animals. Much of the Maya’s time was already spent clearing, planting and harvesting their crops. In mountainous areas, they had to grow crops on terraced hill sides, digging out steps or flat areas to plant their crops. In the flat land, they had to clear a land covered with rocks and raise their planting beds above the ground to keep the rainy season from turning them into mud.

To grow five times more food to feed draft animals, the Maya would have had no time to build buildings, carve glyphs, make ceramic pottery and figurines, paint murals or any of the other wonderful things we have been finding they created during their time.

¹O’Kon, James A. , *The Lost Secrets of Maya Technology*, Career Press, Pompton Plains, NJ, 2012, p50

²<https://horsesinhistory.wordpress.com/2012/06/18/mayan-civilization/>

³O’Kon, James A. , *The Lost Secrets of Maya Technology*, Chapter 9; *The Maya Interstate Highway System*.



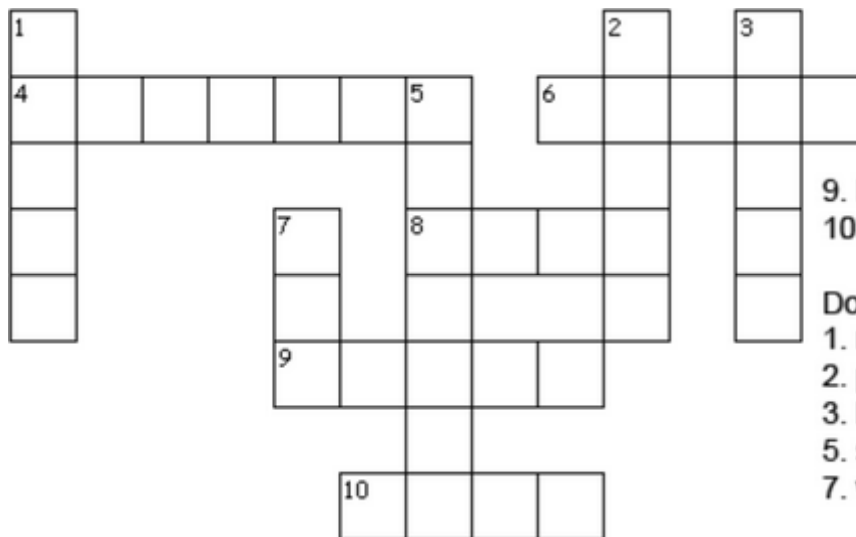
These wheels were found in Tiahuanaco and are of Stone. For over 100 years, scientists would not credit the Ancient Americans with a knowledge of wheels. Now such evidence as shown above has resulted in recognition of the use of wheels by early Americans.

WORD SEARCH

Find and circle the words from the story:

X O A R O C K S I H A R V E S T I N G J N B K
 X G N I R A E L C G N I M R A F A R N Q S S J
 V C Z R D O U H S A T Z I C B M U S X A V R M
 R B B R E S L X H P U O U L S Y O T I H O C O
 N E I Y C L J G L A N D N V A R S O M Y D R D
 T E U D A E S L L K C R I P N M W N D P P O S
 S L M O R E P D N G O U D W I U M E V K M P I
 T G D O R H S R J R J S J F M V H C E R U S S
 R K R F E W R A I F W P X E A R Q H J N D S H
 A T S O T Y K F V Q X O A H L V I C O T D N B
 C P U K W Z S T K P G S O J S Q B M Q Q I O M
 P F Q I I M U B P K B E D D F N Z Z Q J G G I
 W N I A T N U O M Q I R F N A J A E T A R A C
 Q H X V W U M Q I B K D V D V X B B D U T W E
 G O T D S V J Y D C H L G P I F B C M E B J P
 Q Q C V Q A D G N I T N A L P S D G N B C G A

- Animals
- Carts
- Clearing
- Crops
- Draft
- Farming
- Food
- Grow
- Harvesting
- Land
- Mountains
- Mud
- Planting
- Rocks
- Stone
- Terraced
- Toys
- Wagons
- Wheels
- Wood



Across

- 4. gather crops
- 6. Smooth out ground
- 8. wet weather
- 9. Pulling animal
- 10. Round toothed wheel

Down

- 1. round spinning object
- 2. place seed in ground
- 3. hauling object
- 5. stepped planting area
- 7. wet dirt

Come visit our web site for back issues of the Newsletter at www.hceti.org or www.hillcumorahexpeditionteam.com

OTHER SITES OF INTEREST

- http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson_plans/science/archaeology/
 - http://research.history.org/Archaeological_Research/KidsPage.cfm
 - <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2007/08/maya-rise-fall/map-interactive>
 - <http://www.digonsite.com/drdig/mesoamerica/15.html>
 - <http://www.smm.org/sln/ma/index.html>
 - <http://archaeology.la.asu.edu/teo/>
- For questions e-mail me at tscott75@sbcglobal.net

Anticipating Cumorah's Gifts *continued*

back of their skulls. A truly disgusting practice, but consistent with Mormon's description of the treatment of the captured.

Perhaps this was the event that prompted Mormon to eventually write his epistle to the Lamanite leader Aaron, asking to have a final battle in the land of Cumorah. This would buy time for the Nephites to assemble and prepare for a hopeful outcome. Unfortunately, we know the outcome was truly tragic.

We have been studying the place we call Cumorah for nearly 20 years now. Before the Hill Cumorah team began visiting and researching the Cerro Rabon area, Neil Steede had already conducted several projects in the area. One of those was a test pit of soil layers in a prime location for the battle to have taken place. What he discovered was amazing.

There were actually two layers of battle implements found. One layer at the lowest level contained stone battle implements such as hammers, axes and chert arrowheads more consistent with Olmec battle implements. This accounts for the Jaredite final battle that took place at this location.

The upper layer of battle implements included stone hammers, axes, maces, and obsidian blades, spears and arrowheads. These are consistent with Mayan battle implements. Not only are there obsidian blades, spears and arrowheads, but there are two types of obsidian; green from the Otumba volcano to the north by Teotihuacan, and smoky grey from Guatemala volcanos to the south. This translates to green being the Nephite battle implements and smoky grey being the Lamanite battle implements. The ratio of grey to green is three to one. This implies that the Lamanite army was three times larger than the Nephite army.

From Mormon's description of the dead at the final battle, the Nephites numbered at least 240,000

men engaged in the strategy to win the battle. But, the battle implement ratio implies that there were 750,000 Lamanites. In hand-to-hand combat, these are insurmountable odds. This is exactly the description Mormon provides when they see the Lamanites coming.

Mormon 3:9-10 *"And it came to pass that my people, with their wives and their children, did now behold the armies of the Lamanites marching towards them; and with that awful fear of death which fills the breasts of all the wicked did they wait to receive them. And it came to pass that they came to battle against us, and every soul was filled with terror because of the greatness of their numbers."*

In addition to the battle implements found in the area we believe is Cumorah, the lay of the land is very conducive to battle strategies. High hills to house signal stations and a narrow valley with ambush points into which the Nephites could funnel the attacking Lamanite army and eventually engage the Lamanites from high ground. The problem was the overpowering numbers of the Lamanites who far outlasted the momentary advantage the Nephites tried to employ.

What do we expect to find at the Cumorah dig site? The imagination can run wild with possibilities, but there are certain things that we expect to find because we are told specifically by Mormon. We first learn of Mormon getting the plates from the following passages:

Mormon 1:43-44 *"And now, the city of Jashon was near the land where Ammoron had deposited the records unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed. And behold, I had gone according to the word of Ammoron, and taken the plates of Nephi, and did make a record according to the words of Ammoron."*

Here Mormon specifically states he is getting the plates of Nephi and begins making the abridged record that we have today and call the

Book of Mormon. Then, later in the text, as the Nephites are retreating northward, Mormon is close to the hill Shim and retrieves all of the records Ammoron deposited there.

Mormon 2:25 *"And now, I, Mormon, seeing that the Lamanites were about to overthrow the land, therefore, I did go to the hill Shim and did take up **all** the records which Ammoron had hid up unto the Lord."*

Mormon already had the plates of Nephi, but there were other plates he had not yet obtained. The story then moves to the engagement of the final battle in Cumorah. Here Mormon records what he buried.

Mormon 3:7-8 *"And it came to pass that when we had gathered in all our people in one to the land of Cumorah, behold, I, Mormon, began to be old; and, knowing it to be the last struggle of my people, and having been commanded of the Lord that I should not suffer that the records which had been handed down by our fathers, which were sacred, to fall into the hands of the Lamanites (for the Lamanites would destroy them), Therefore, I made this record out of the plates of Nephi and hid up in the hill Cumorah **all the records** which had been entrusted to me by the hand of the Lord, save it were these few plates which I gave unto my son Moroni."*

Mormon buried all of the records in the hill except for the few plates he gave to Moroni, which we assume to be the 24 Golden Plates of Ether, since it is Moroni who is writing their translation into the abridged record. This library is what we expect to find in the dig.

Beyond this, there is only speculation. What about the Liahona, the Sword of Laban, the interpreters? Are there other items from the Jewish treasury that were not mentioned? Only time will tell when the dig reveals the sacred treasures Mormon buried there. Your prayers for the "big reveal" are requested.

**We're on the web at
www.hceti.org**

The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team, Inc is a Missouri not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the study, research and dissemination of information as it pertains to the Book of Mormon. Our primary focus is to research and assemble archaeological and other related information to help establish the historical feasibility of the Book of Mormon.

HILL CUMORAH EXPEDITION TEAM, INC

Searching for Truth

c/o David B. Brown
311 N Lee Street
Buckner, Mo 64016

Phone: 816-651-6974
E-mail: dbb92558@yahoo.com

Contributors and Editors

Mike Brown
Neil Steede

Children's Page by Terry and Chris Scott

Photos by:
David Brown
Joanie Glandon
Terry Scott

Another Experience on the Hill *By Neil Steede*

2019 is a year of initiating projects that are important to the future of our faith in the truth of the Book of Mormon. In February and April of this year, we again ventured to Jalapa de Diaz, but this time to begin defining the size and scope of an archaeological dig that Early Sites Research Society (ESRS) is sponsoring. Many in the Independence, Missouri area have heard of our most recent experience when visiting what we consider to be the Hill Cumorah in Oaxaca, Mexico. Several events occurred at that time that are worth mentioning, but I will provide one of them in this article.

On the 5th of April, 2019, as we prepared to go up the hill, I had a short conversation with the land owner. I was expressing to him the content of the signs that I intend to post at the dig site of Coxca. Among those signs I want to have several designating points of interest such as each of the bridges, the

pool of spring water, and a sign honoring his father Ignacio because it was his father who first led me to the site. His father was also the first to confirm the visitation of the three "ancient ones" that our faith calls the Three Nephites. Juan (the landowner) grew very excited when I mentioned this last sign.

"You know," he told me, "that this land of ours had to be sacred to the ancients. Our family was known as the 'caretakers' of this 'holy site.' That we should 'guard it' for the future."

"I had two offers," Juan continued, "to sell this land earlier this year. I am glad I did not except either offer. Though, I have never seen the three ancient ones, I know that my father had. My father taught us to not



be slaves to drugs or bad habits. I still thank him for that teaching." "That teaching, I have passed on to my children. And, indeed, I can see that all of their lives have been enriched because of this teaching. Not only has our religious lives been enriched, but our everyday lives have also.

"I can see such an 'enrichment' is in all of your lives, also."

"My father's teachings were from the distant past, yet they are for the distant future. All of us are only transitional. And, I thank God for this most important role. I even thank God for permitting me to comprehend the meaning of this role."

"I thank God that you are here and are helping us to give this hidden gift to the world."