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Appendix A: Statements, by Date, Relevant to the Geography of Book of Mormon Events, by LDS Leaders or Others Reflecting Views Current in the Church

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[1827]

See [1845] Lucy Mack Smith.

[1829]

See [1878] David Whitmer.

[1830]

Doctrine and Covenants 28:8-9.

. . . You shall go unto the Lamanites and preach my gospel The city of Zion shall be built on the borders by the Lamanites.

Doctrine and Covenants 32:2.

. . . Into the wilderness among the Lamanites.

[1831]

Doctrine and Covenants 54:8.

A group of the saints in Ohio are commanded to flee the land and "take your journey into the regions westward, unto the land of Missouri, unto the borders of the Lamanites."

[1832]

Phelps, W. W. *Evening and Morning Star*, October 1832; *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, July 1836, p. 341:

. . . These vast prairies of the far west . . . the Book of Mormon terms them the land of desolation."

(Compare Levi Ward Hancock, *The Life of Levi W. Hancock*, typescript, BYU Library, who reported that Joseph Smith called North America the "land of desolation.")

[1834]

For a complete treatment of all known statements on the Zelph incident which took place during the Zion's Camp journey, see Kenneth A. Godfrey, *The Zelph Story, F.A.R.M.S. Paper* GDF-89, 1989; a shorter version of the same, without the copies of the original sources, can be seen in *BYU Studies* 29 (Spring 1989), pages 31-56.

[1835]

Oliver Cowdery. *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, July 1835, p. 158-159. (Reprinted in *The Times and Seasons* 2, 1841, page 379, and again in *The Improvement Era* 2, 1899, pages 729-734.)

Re. the New York hill Cumorah: "At about one mile west rises another ridge of less height, running parallel with the former . . . between these hills, the entire power and national strength of both the Jaredites and Nephites were destroyed.

. . . . By turning to the 529th and 530th pages of the Book of Mormon you will read Mormon's account of the last great struggle as they were encamped round this hill cumorah. In this valley fell the remaining strength and pride of a once powerful people, the Nephites—once so highly favored of the Lord, but at that time in darkness, doomed to suffer extermination by the hand of their barbarous and uncivilized brethren. From the top of this hill, Mormon, with a few others, after the battle, gazed with horror upon the mangled remains of those who, the day before, were filled with anxiety, hope, or doubt. A few had fled to the south, who were hunted down by the victorious party.

. . . . This hill, by the Jaredites, was called Ramah; by it, or around it, pitched the famous army of Coriantumr their tents. Coriantumr was the last king of the Jaredites. The opposing army were to the west, and in this same valley, and near by, from day to day, did that mighty race spill their blood In this same spot, in full view from the top of this same hill, one may gaze with astonishment upon the ground which was twice covered with the dead and dying . . .

[1836?]

Frederick G. Williams may have written down a statement about Lehi's party landing at 30 degrees south latitude, in Chile. See the material about J. M. Bernhisel under [1845].

[1838]

Joseph Smith, Jr. *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* 3:34-35.

Regarding "Tower Hill," north of Far West, Missouri: "He (L. Wight) lives at the foot of Tower Hill (a name I gave the place in consequence of the remains of an old Nephite altar or tower that stood there)"

[1838]

Samuel D. Tyler. Journal. In *Manuscript History*, Sept. 25, 1838, page 829, Book B-1.

Sept. 25, 1838. We [the Kirtland camp] passed through Huntsville, Co. seat of Randolph Co. Pop. 450, and three miles further we bought 32 bu. of

corn off one of the brethren who resides in this place. There are several of the brethren round about here and this is the ancient site of the City of Manti, which is spoken of in the Book of Mormon and this is appointed one of the Stakes of Zion. . . .

A. Jenson, Historical Record, Book 1, page 601 (also in *Millennial Star* 16:296):

The camp passed through Huntsville, in Randolph County, which has been appointed as one of the stakes of Zion, and is the ancient site of the City of Manti [No origin of the statement about Manti is credited in either record. It has been inferred, plausibly, to have come from Joseph Smith. According to the Book of Mormon, of course, the Nephite city of Manti was south of the city of Zarahemla and obviously south of the narrow neck of land; its location was not far from the headwaters of the north-flowing Sidon River. It is obvious that no place in Missouri, nor in North America, could qualify in these terms, hence there had to be an error in the original assertion or in its transmission.]

[1840]

Orson Pratt, *An Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions, and of the Late Discovery of Ancient Records*, 1840. Third American edition, New York, 1842, page 18.

Mentions “the western coast of South America” as the site of Lehi’s landing.

[1841]

Joseph Smith Junior. Letter to John Bernhisel dated 16 November 1841, in, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, Dean C. Jessee, ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), page 502:

Bernhisel had sent a copy of John Lloyd Stephens’ *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan* to Joseph. In this letter the prophet thanks the donor and observes of the book, “of all histories that had been written pertaining to the antiquities of this country it is the most correct, luminous & Comprehensive—” and it “supports the testimony of the Book of Mormon.” (Compare *The Times and Seasons* excerpts below.)

[1842]

Charles [Blancher] Thompson. *Evidence in Proof of the Book of Mormon*. Batavia, New York, 1841. *Times and Seasons*, 1 Jan. 1842, pages 640-644.

Gives a positive review of Thompson’s book wherein he states (p. 101) “. . . the people whose history is contained in the Book of Mormon, are the authors of these works” (i.e., antiquities of the eastern U.S.)

[1842]

Joseph Smith, Jr. (The Wentworth Letter) *The Times and Seasons*, 3 (1 March 1842), pages 707-708. And in *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4:537-538. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1932-51.

In this important and interesting book the history of ancient America is unfolded, from its first settlement . . . to the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian era. We are informed by these records that America in ancient times has been inhabited by two distinct races of people. . . . The principal nation of the second race fell in battle towards the close of the fourth century. The remnant are the Indians that now inhabit this country.

[1842]

[September 6] *Doctrine and Covenants* 128:19-20:

And again, what do we hear? Glad tidings from Cumorah! Moroni, an angel from heaven, declaring the fulfillment of the prophets— the book to be revealed. [It is clear that by the date of this revelation, Joseph Smith, and seemingly his readers generally, commonly recognized the term Cumorah to refer to the hill in New York.]

[1842]

John Taylor or Joseph Smith. *The Times and Seasons* 3(22) (15 Sept. 1842), pages 914-915:

[Regarding the authorship of the following, see *The Times and Seasons* 3(15 March 1842), page 710, where Joseph Smith announced the commencement of his career as editor of *The Times and Seasons* and stated, "I alone stand responsible for it . . ." The actual (managing) editor was John Taylor]

Mr. Stephens' great developments of antiquities are made bare to the eyes of all the people by reading the history of the Nephites in the Book of Mormon. They lived about the narrow neck of land, which now embraces Central America, with all the cities that can be found. . . . Read the destruction of cities at the crucifixion of Christ, pages 459-60. Who could have dreamed that twelve years could have developed such incontrovertible testimony to the Book of Mormon?

From an extract from 'Stephens' Incidents of Travel in Central America,' it will be seen that the proof of the Nephites and Lamanites dwelling on this continent, according to the account in the Book of Mormon, is developing itself in a more satisfactory way than the most sanguine believer in that revelation could have anticipated.

Pages 921-922: . . . 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

[1842]

The Times and Seasons, 3(23) (1 October 1842), page 927:

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

And now it was only the distance of a day and a half's journey for a Nephite, on the line Bountiful and the land Desolation, from the east to the west sea; and thus the land of Nephi, and the land of Zarahemla was nearly surrounded by water: there being a small neck of land between the land northward and the land southward [See Book of Mormon 3d edition, page 280-81 {Alma 22:32}].

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

. . . . It will not be a bad plan to compare Mr. Stephens' ruined cities with those of the Book of Mormon: light cleaves to light, and facts are supported by facts. The truth injures no one, and so we make another Extract . . . [followed by a page of material from the book].

[1843]

The Times and Seasons 4 (1 October 1843)(Facts are Stubborn Things), pages 346-347:

A comment is made on John Lloyd Stephens' *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*, volume 2 (1843): "It will be seen that the proof of the Nephites and Lamanites dwelling on this continent, according to the account in the Book of Mormon, is developing itself in a more satisfactory way than the most sanguine believer in that revelation, could have anticipated

This is a work that ought to be in the hands of every Latter-day Saint; corroborating, as it does the history of the Book of Mormon. There is no stronger circumstantial evidence of the authenticity of the latter book, can be given, [sic] than that contained in Mr. Stephens' works.

. . . It has fallen to his lot to explore the ruins of this once mighty people, but the 'Book of Mormon' unfolds their history . . . accounts of a people, and of cities that bear a striking resemblance to those mentioned by Mr. Stephens, both in regard to magnificence and location, it affords the most indubitable testimony of the historical truth of that book

[1844]

Mosiah Lyman Hancock, *Autobiography*, mimeographed volume, page 28 (in BYU Library):

Hancock says that while he was a ten-year-old boy in Nauvoo in 1844 ". . . The Prophet came to our home and . . . I . . . got my map for him. 'Now,' he said, 'I will show you the travels of this people.' He then showed our travels through Iowa, and said, 'Here you will make a place for the winter; and here you will travel west until you come to the valley of the Great Salt Lake! . . . But, the United States will not receive you with the laws which God desires you to live, and you will have to go to where the Nephites lost their power Those who are desirous to live the laws of God will have to go South,'" indicating at the same time on the map with his finger the direction of Mexico.

[1845]

Lucy Mack Smith. *History of Joseph Smith*. First ed., Liverpool, 1853 [written in 1845]. First Utah ed., 1901, Salt Lake City, page 100.

A short time after the marriage of Joseph [1827], his mother reported eighteen years later, that after a visit to the hill, he referred to "the hill of Cumorah." [But see the 1878 statement of David Whitmer, which seems contradictory.]

[1845]

In regard to "LEHI'S TRAVELS.—Revelation to Joseph the Seer," first published in 1882 (in James A. Little and Franklin D. Richards, *A Compendium of the Doctrines of the Gospel*. Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1882, p. 289), see the comprehensive treatment of materials on this statement, which was attributed to Joseph Smith by Little and Richards, that can be found in Frederick G. Williams III, *Did Lehi Land in Chile? An Assessment of the Frederick G. Williams Statement*, *F.A.R.M.S. Paper* WIL-88. A date of 1845 (or earlier) is here attributed to the statement (rather than the 1882 of its first publication) because of its occurrence in a J. M. Bernhisel manuscript of 1845, as told in Williams' paper and in Robert J. Matthews, *Notes on "Lehi's Travels," BYU Studies* 12(3), 1972, pages 312-14. The original date may have been 1836; compare the entry under date [1836?] above.

[1848]

Orson Pratt. *Divine Authenticity—or was Joseph Smith Sent of God?* Liverpool, 1848. Reprinted in, *Orson Pratt's Works on the Doctrines of the Gospel* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1945), page 22:

In the Book of Mormon are given the names and locations of numerous cities of great magnitude, which once flourished among the ancient nations of America. The northern portions of South America, and also Central America, were the most densely population.

. . . . A careful reader of that interesting book, can trace the relative bearings, and distances of many of these cities from each other; and if acquainted with the present geographical features of the country, he can, by the descriptions given in that book, determine, very nearly, the precise spot of ground they once occupied. . . . The mouldering ruins of many splendid edifices and towers, and magnificent cities of great extent, have been discovered by Catherwood and Stephens in the interior wilds of Central America, in the very region where the ancient cities described in the Book of Mormon were said to exist.

[1848]

Orson Pratt. *Millennial Star* 10(22, 15 November 1848)(“Editorial”—O. P. was editor), page 346-347:

The first great nation that anciently inhabited Yucatan, passed away about 2,400 years ago; but their prophets left a history, an abridgment of which has been translated into the English language, called the ‘Book of Ether’. . . . The last great nation that inhabited that country and passed away, have also left their history, which was discovered, translated, and published in the English language nearly 20 years ago by Mr. Joseph Smith.

. . . . “Mr. Mormon says, that in the 367th year after Christ, “the Lamanites”—the forefathers of the American Indian—“took possession of the city of Desolation”—which was in Central America, near to or in Yucatan—“and this because their number did exceed the number of the Nephites”—the Nephites being the Nation who inhabited the cities of Yucatan—“and they”—the Lamanites—“did also march forward against the city of Teancum

. . . .
In the 384th year, the occupants of Yucatan and Central America, having been driven from their great and magnificent cities, were pursued by the Lamanites to the hill Cumorah . . . where the whole nation perished in battle.

[1849]

Orson Pratt, Reply to a Pamphlet Printed in Glasgow, Entitled “Remarks on Mormonism,” [Part III]. *Millennial Star* 11(8)(15 April 1849), pages 115-116:

In my remarks upon the evidence in favor of Joseph Smith’s divine mission, (‘Divine Authority,’ page 13) I have, among numerous other

evidences adduced, referred to the late discoveries of Catherwood and Stephens in Central America, as confirmatory evidence of the truth of the Book of Mormon. Mr. Paton considers this as no evidence at all, and refers to the discoveries of Baron Humboldt and many other antiquarians, long before Mr. Smith translated that book. No one will dispute the fact that the existence of antique remains in different parts of America was known long before Mr. Smith was born. But every well informed person knows that the most of the discoveries made by Catherwood and Stephens were original—that the most of the forty-four cities described by him had not been described by previous travelers. Now the Book of Mormon gives us the names and locations of great numbers of cities in the very region where Catherwood and Stephens afterwards discovered them.

[1851]

Parley P. Pratt. *Proclamation! to the People of the Coasts and Islands of the Pacific*. Pamphlet, 1851:

Arriving at the sea coast they built a ship, put on board the necessary provisions and the seeds 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.'

[1855]

Parley P. Pratt. *Key to the Science of Theology*. F. D. Richards: Liverpool, 1855, pages 22-23:

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.

[1866]

Orson Pratt. *Millennial Star* 28 (16 June 1866), page 370:

In an article on the differential hour of the reports for the crucifixion as between the Bible and the Book of Mormon, the editor, Orson Pratt, refers to that Nephi who wrote the New World account of the crucifixion time:

. . . we have the strongest reasons for believing that he, at the time, resided in the northwestern portions of South America, near a temple which they had built in the land Bountiful, which the record informs us was not far south of the narrow neck of land, connecting the land south with the land north; but which we, in these days, call the Isthmus of Darien.

Pages 390-394:

The Hill Cumorah is situated in western New York

It . . . is distinguished as the great battlefield on which, and near which, two powerful nations were concentrated with all their forces, men, women

and children, and fought till hundreds of thousands on both sides were hewn down, and left to molder upon the ground. . . .

The Hill Cumorah is remarkable also as being the hill on which and around which, a still more ancient nation perished, called Jaredites Millions fought millions, until the Hill Ramah, and the land round about, was soaked with blood

Page 801 (Sacred Metallic Plates):

. . . After [Lehi's] arrival on the coast of Chili The Hebrew mound builders

[1868]

Orson Pratt. *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool)1869. vol. 12, pages 340-342:

. . . By the command of the Lord they [the Jaredites] collected seeds and grain of every kind, and animals of almost every description, among which, no doubt, were the elephant and the curelom and the cumom, very huge animals that existed in those days they eventually came to the great Pacific ocean, on the eastern borders of China or somewhere in that region

But the most wonderful thing concerning the first colonization of this country after the flood was the way that they navigated the great Pacific ocean. Only think for a few moments of the Lord our God taking eight barges, launched on the eastern coast of China, and bringing them a voyage of three hundred and forty four days and landing them all in the same neighborhood and vicinity at the same time

They landed to the south of this, just below the Gulf of California, on the western coast. They inhabited North America, and spread forth on this Continent, and in the course of some sixteen hundred years residence here, they became a mighty and powerful nation. . . .

On a certain occasion there were a very few individuals, Omer and his family and some few of his friends, that were righteous enough to be spared out of a whole nation. The Lord warned them by a dream to depart from the land of Moran [sic], and led them forth in an easterly direction beyond the hill Cumorah, down into the eastern countries upon the sea shore. By this means a few families were saved, while all the balance, consisting of millions of people, were overthrown because of their wickedness. But after they were destroyed, the Omerites, who dwelt in the New England States, returned again and dwelt in the land of their fathers on the western coast.

. . . Their greatest and last struggles were in the State of New York, near where the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated were found. . . . Coriantumr, King of a certain portion of the Jaredites, after the destruction of his nation, wandered, solitary and alone, down towards the Isthmus of Darien, and there he became acquainted with a colony of people brought from the land of Jerusalem, called the people of Zarahemla

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. . . . A little over one century before Christ, the Nephites united with the Zarahemlites in the northern portions of South America, and were called Nephites and became a powerful nation. The country was called the land Bountiful, and included within the land of Zarahemla [sic] 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. . . . Nephi and the righteous separated themselves from the Lamanites and traveled about eighteen hundred miles north until they came to the head waters of what we term the Amazon river. There Nephi located his little colony in the country supposed to be Ecuador. . . .

Here the Nephites flourished for some length of time. The Lamanites followed them up and they had many wars and contentions, and finally the Lamanites succeeded in taking away their settlements, and the Nephites fled again some twenty days journey to the northward and united themselves with the people of Zarahemla.

. . . Numerous hosts of the Jaredites once spread over all the face of North America.

[1870]

Orson Pratt. *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool 1871)14 (27 Nov. 1870), page 298:

On what part of this continent did Jesus appear? He appeared in what is now termed the northern part of South America, where they had a temple built, at which place the people were gathered together, some twenty-five hundred in number, marveling and wondering at the great earthquake that had taken place on this land

[1872]

Orson Pratt. *Journal of Discourses* 14 (11 Feb. 1872), page 324-30, 333:

When I contemplate the vast number of millions that must have swarmed over this great western hemisphere in times of old, building large cities, towns and villages, and spreading themselves forth from shore to shore from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the frozen regions of the north to the uttermost extremity of South America This book . . . (the Book of Mormon) . . . (was) . . . delivered by divine inspiration in ancient times to prophets, revelators and inspired men who dwelt upon this continent, both in North and South America.

. . . 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.

. . . The Nephites were commanded of the Lord to depart from their midst, that is to leave the first place of colonization in the country which the Spanish now call Chili. They came northward from their first landing place traveling, according to the record, as near as I can judge, some two thousand miles. The Lamanites remained in possession of the country on the South. The Nephites formed a colony not far from the headwaters of the river Amazon, and they dwelt there some four centuries The Lamanites in the South and in the middle portions of South America, also spread forth and multiplied, and became a very strong and powerful nation. . . . [Later] a certain portion of them (the Nephites) who still believed were commanded of the Lord to leave their brethren . . . and . . . under the guidance of prophets and revelators, came still further northward, emigrating from the head waters of what we now term the river Amazon, upon the western coast, or not far from the western coast, until they came on the waters of the river which we call the Magdalena. On this river, not a great distance from the mouth thereof, in what is now termed the United States of Columbia [sic], they built their great capital city. They also discovered another nation that already possessed that country, called the people of Zarahemla.

. . . The Nephites and the people of Zarahemla united together and formed a great and powerful nation, occupying the lands south of the Isthmus for many hundreds of miles, and also from the Pacific on the west to the Atlantic on the east, spreading all through the country. The Lamanites about this time also occupied South America, the middle or southern portion of it, and were exceedingly numerous

About fifty-four years before Christ, five thousand four hundred men, with their wives and children, left the northern portion of South America, passed through the Isthmus, came into this north country, the north wing of the continent, and began to settle up North America [The] Nephite nation about this time commenced the art of shipbuilding. They built many ships, launching them forth into the western ocean. The place of the building of these ships was near the Isthmus of Darien. Scores of thousands entered these ships year after year, and passed along on the western coast northward, and began to settle the western coast on the north wing of the continent I will observe another thing—when they came into North America they found all this country covered with the ruins of cities, villages and towns, the inhabitants having been cut off and destroyed. The timber had also been cut off, insomuch that in many places there was no timber. . . . Forty-five years before the coming of Christ there was a vast colony came out of South America, and it is said in the Book of Mormon that they went an exceeding great distance, until they came to large bodies of water and to many rivers

and fountains, and when we come to read more fully the description of the country it answers to the great Mississippi Valley. There they formed a colony. We know that to be the region of country from the fact that these plates were taken from a hill in the interior of the State of New York, being the descendants of those same colonists that settled in the valley of the Mississippi. . . . In process of time they spread forth on the right and on the left, and the whole face of the North American continent was covered by cities, towns and villages and population.

. . . twelve Nephites who were called by the personal ministry of Jesus, were commanded to go forth and preach the Gospel on all the face of the North and South American continent

. . . .

At the time of the crucifixion the Nephites dwelt in North America and also occupied a portion of South America

About three hundred and seventy-five years after the birth of Christ, the Nephites occupying North America, the Lamanites South America . . . , the Lamanites began to overpower the Nephites, and they drove them northward from the narrow neck of land which we call the Isthmus of Darien, burning, destroying and desolating every city, town and village through which they passed. The Nephites continued to flee before their conquerors until they came into the interior of the State of New York. . . , the whole Nephite nation (gathering) into that one region, and the Lamanites gathering the whole Lamanite nation into the same region of country. . . . The great and last battle . . . was on the hill Cumorah, the same hill from which the plates were taken by Joseph Smith

[1874?]

Brigham Young. E. C. McGavin, *Mormonism and Masonry*, p. 156:

When the site was selected for the St. George Temple, B. Young "explained that the Temple must be built at that place because the Nephites had previously dedicated that very site for the erection of a Temple, but had been unable to bring their hopes to a full fruition."

[1876]

Orson Pratt, *Millennial Star* (1876) 38, page 693:

The [Jaredite] colony, . . . landed on the western coast of Mexico, and extended their settlements over all the North American portion of the continent, where they dwelt until about six centuries before Christ

Page 691-2: Lehi's landing place, "as is believed, (was) not far from the 30th degree south latitude."

[1877]

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool, 1878), vol.19:36-39:
(The) treasures that are in the earth are carefully watched, they can be moved from place to place according to the good pleasure of Him who made them and owns them. . . . Oliver Cowdery went with the Prophet Joseph when he deposited [i.e., returned] these plates. Joseph did not translate all of the plates. There was a portion of them sealed, which you can learn from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. When Joseph got the plates, the angel instructed him to carry them back to the hill Cumorah, which he did. Oliver says that when Joseph and Oliver went there the hill opened and they walked into a cave, in which there was a large and spacious room. He says he did not think, at the time, whether they had the sunlight or artificial light; but that it was just as light as day. They laid the plates on a table; it was a large table that stood in the room. Under this table there was a pile of plates as much as two feet high, and there were altogether in this room more plates probably than many wagon loads; they were piled up in the corners and along the walls. The first time they went there the sword of Laban hung upon the wall; but when they went again it had been taken down and laid upon the table across the gold plates; it was unsheathed, and on it was written these words: 'This sword will never be sheathed again until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ.' I tell you this as coming not only from Oliver Cowdery, but others who were familiar with it.

[1877]

Brigham Young. Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, (Salt Lake City, 3d edition, 1967) p. 477.

On April 25, 1877, B. Young, accompanied by Warren S. Snow, went to the place where the Manti Temple was to be built and said, according to Snow:

Here is the spot where the Prophet Moroni stood and dedicated this piece of land for a Temple site, and that is the reason why the location is made here, and we can't move it from this spot

[1878]

David Whitmer. *Millennial Star* 40 (1870), page 722:

When I was returning to Fayette, with Joseph and Oliver, all of us riding in the wagon, Oliver and I on an old-fashioned, wooden spring seat, and Joseph behind us—when traveling along in a clear open space, a very pleasant, nice-looking, old man suddenly appeared by the side of the wagon, and saluted us with, 'Good morning, it is very warm,' at the same time wiping his face or forehead with his hand. We returned the salutation, and, by a sign from Joseph, I invited him to ride, if he was going our way; but he said very pleasantly, 'No, I am going to Cumorah.' This name was something new to me. I did not know what Cumorah meant. We all gazed at him and at

each other, and as I looked around inquiringly at Joseph, the old man instantly disappeared, so that I did not see him again.

[If his mother's biography of Joseph is correct, the name Cumorah would not have been new to Joseph at this time. The two sources contradict each other enough that one wonders about the soundness of this detailed recollection after fifty years had passed and given Whitmer's advanced age. Of course, Lucy Mack Smith's statement was itself a recollection after eighteen years.]

[1880]

George Reynolds. *The Lands of the Nephites. The Land of Nephi, Juvenile Instructor* 15 (1 December 1880), page 274.

Regarding the landing place of Lehi's party:

. . . 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.

[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. Page 24:

"19 Q. Where does the Prophet Joseph Smith tell us they landed? A. On the coast of Chili in South America."

[1888]

B. H. Roberts, *A New Witness for God*, Compiled and published by Lynn Pulsipher, n. p., 1986. A compilation of ten pieces by Roberts first published in 1888 in the *Millennial Star*; they became the basis upon which he published (1909) his three volumes entitled *New Witnesses for God*:

[Lehi and party in Arabia] 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)

In the second century B.C., a company of Nephites [Limhi's exploring party] wandered into North America, and there discovered evidences of that land having been formerly inhabited by a numerous people . . . (50:409)

[The Book of Mormon] locates the chief centers of civilization in those parts of the American Continent where the subsequent researches of the American antiquarians prove them to have existed." (50:428)

[1890]

George Q. Cannon, Editorial, *Juvenile Instructor*, Jan. 1, 1890. Reprinted in *The Instructor* 73, 4 (April), pages 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.

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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."

[1899]

James E. Talmage, *'The Book of Mormon,' an Account of its Origin, with Evidences of its Genuineness and Authenticity.* (A pamphlet consisting of two lectures.) 1899. Pages 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, then, crossing the Isthmus [Panama], they extended their domain over the southern, central, and eastern portions of what is now the United States of America."

[1909]

B. H. Roberts. *New Witnesses for God. II. The Book of Mormon, Vol. III.* Deseret News: Salt Lake City, 1909. Pages 501-502:

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 hand-writing 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 . . . passage and the revelation pertaining to John But there is no heading 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 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's *Compendium* 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 evidence of its being a 'revelation to Joseph, the Seer,' rests on a very unsatisfactory basis."

Pages 503-504:

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 generations 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 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.

[1918 or earlier]

Frederick J. Pack and George D. Pyper, *The Instructor* 73, no. 4, April 1938, page 160:

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 concerns the statement in the Richards and Little *Compendium* supposedly revealing the route followed by Lehi. Pack notes that the 1857 English edition of the *Compendium* lacked the statement, but American editions beginning with 1882 have included it. Then, "Its authenticity, however, is subject to grave doubt, as witness the following: The only known source of authority is a single sheet of manuscript presented to the Church Historian's office, in 1864, by Ezra G. Williams, son of Frederick G. Williams . . ." But the *Compendium* caption is not on this sheet, although the writing "bears a good deal of evidence of having been written in the hand" of F. G. Williams. "The Church has issued no information concerning the route followed by Lehi Until this is done, teachers of the Gospel Doctrine department should refrain from expressing definite opinions.

Immediately following the Pack letter is this:

(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.)

[1928]

B. H. Roberts, *The Deseret News*, 3 March 1928.

In an article citing Book of Mormon verses and Church history statements, he concludes that the New York Hill Cumorah was the final battle site of the

Nephites. In his opinion, the facts he cites “eliminate all doubt about the hill recently purchased for the Church” being that battleground.

[1928]

Anthony W. Ivins, *Improvement Era* 31, 1928, pages 674-681:

“Reference has been made by the President of the acquisition of the Church of the spot of ground in the state of New York known as the hill Cumorah. . . . There have been some differences of opinion in regard to it That it was around this hill that the armies of both the Jaredites and Nephites fought their great last battles.

[1938]

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Where is the Hill Cumorah? The Church News*, September 10, 1938. Reprinted (and expanded?) in *Doctrines of Salvation* (Salt Lake City, 196), vol. 3, pages 232-243:

Speculation about Book of Mormon Geography. Within recent years there has arisen among certain students of the Book of Mormon a *theory* to the effect that within the period covered by the Book of Mormon, the Nephites and Lamanites were confined almost entirely within the borders of the territory comprising Central America and the southern portion of Mexico—the isthmus of Tehautepec [sic] probably being the ‘narrow neck’ of land spoken of in the Book of Mormon rather than the isthmus of Panama.

This theory is founded upon the assumption that it was impossible for the colony of Lehi’s to multiply and fill the hemisphere within the limits of 1,000 years Moreover, they claim that the story in the Book of Mormon of the migrations, building of cities, and the wars and contentions, preclude the possibility of the people spreading over great distances such as we find within the borders of North and South America.

. . . .
Locale of Cumorah, Ramah, and Ripliancum. This modernistic theory of necessity, in order to be consistent, must place the waters of Ripliancum and the Hill Cumorah some place within the restricted territory of Central America, notwithstanding the teachings of the Church to the contrary for upwards of 100 years. Because of this *theory* some members of the Church have become confused and greatly disturbed in their faith in the Book of Mormon. It is for this reason that evidence is here presented to show that it is not only possible that these places could be located as the Church has held during the past century, but that in very deed *such is the case*.

Early Brethren Locate Cumorah in Western New York. . . . The Prophet Joseph Smith himself is on record, definitely declaring the present hill called Cumorah to be the exact hill spoken of in the Book of Mormon.

Further, the fact that all of his associates from the beginning down have spoken of it as the identical hill where Mormon and Moroni hid the records, must carry some weight. It is difficult for a reasonable person to believe that

such men as Oliver Cowdery, Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, David Whitmer, and many others, could speak frequently of the spot where the Prophet Joseph Smith obtained the plates as the Hill Cumorah, and not be corrected by the Prophet, if that were not the fact. . . .”

Doctrines of Salvation, volume 3, pages 203-204:

It makes no difference what is written or what anyone has said, if what has been said is in conflict with what the Lord has revealed, we can set it aside. My words, and the teachings of any other member of the Church, high or low, if they do not square with the revelations, we need not accept them. Let us have this matter clear. We have accepted the four standard works as the measuring yardsticks or balances, by which we measure every man’s doctrine. You cannot accept the books written by the authorities of the Church as standards in doctrine, only in so far as they accord with the revealed word in the standard works.

[1947]

John A. Widtsoe, Preface, to Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Cumorah, Where?* (The Author: Oakland, California):

Out of the studies of faithful Latter-day Saints may yet come a unity of opinion concerning Book of Mormon geography.

[1950]

John A. Widtsoe, Is Book of Mormon Geography Known? *Improvement Era*, 53, 7 (July), 1950, pages 547, 596-597:

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

....

. . . There is a controversy, however, about the Hill Cumorah—not about the location where the Book of Mormon plates were found, but whether it is the hill under that name near which Nephite events took place. A name, says one, may be applied to more than one hill; and plates containing the records of a people, sacred things, could be moved from place to place by divine help.

[An article in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842 reviewing the book on the Mayan ruins, by Stephens and Catherwood,] . . . seems to place many Book of Mormon activities in that region.. The interesting fact in this connection is that the Prophet Joseph Smith at this time was editor of the *Times and Seasons*, and had announced his full editorial responsibility for the paper. This seems to give the subjoined article an authority it might not otherwise possess [and, added in the reprinting of this article in his book, *Evidences and Reconciliations*,] and offers the only solid Church authoritative base upon which one may pursue a study of Book of Mormon geography.

Out of diligent, prayerful study, we may be led to a better understanding of times and places in the history of the people who move across the pages of the divinely given Book of Mormon.

[1959]

Harold B. Lee. Quarterly Historical Report for the Andes Mission, Nov. 11, 1959:

. . . from the writings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and of other inspired men, it seems all are in agreement that the followers of Lehi came to the western shores of South America I believe we are (today) not far from the place where the history of the people of Lehi commenced in western America.