



BOOK OF MORMON CENTRAL

<https://bookofmormoncentral.org/>

Type: Newsletter

Insights, Vol. 13, No. 5 (September 1993)

Editor(s): FARMS Staff

Published by: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies



The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) existed from 1979 until 2006, when it was formally incorporated into the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship. Archived by permission.



The Foundation for
Ancient Research
& Mormon Studies

INSIGHTS

AN ANCIENT WINDOW

1993, No. 5

"...by study and also by faith." D & C 88:118

September

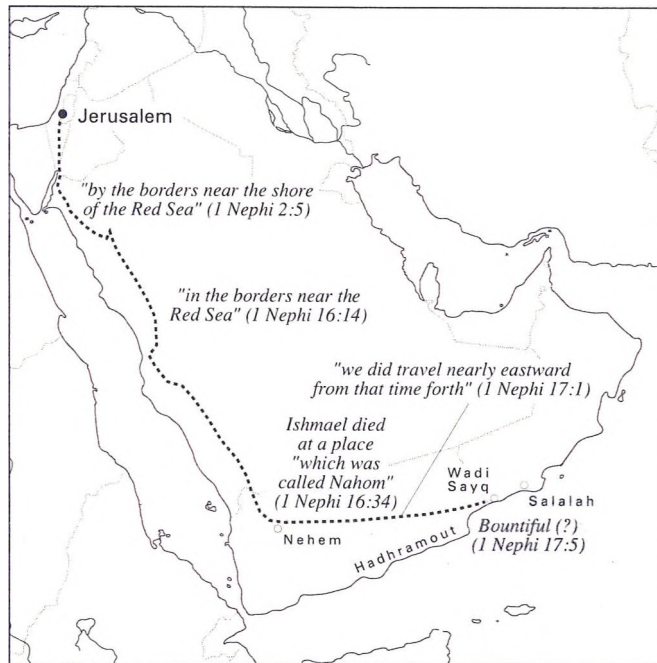
F.A.R.M.S.-Led Expedition Examines Likely Candidate for Lehi's Old-World Bountiful

The much-delayed and long-awaited examination of Wadi Sayq, a likely site for Old World Bountiful, became a reality recently. In April, a team of researchers examined the port area of Khor Kharfot ("Fort Inlet" in English) through which the Wadi Sayq enters the Indian Ocean on the southern coast of Oman, at the extreme western end near the border with Yemen. Their findings indicate that Khor Kharfot may be the site of Lehi's Bountiful.

Through almost one decade of preparatory research, Warren Aston of Australia, with the assistance of his wife Michaela, has identified this site as a possible location of ancient Bountiful where Lehi's party camped and built the ship by

which they sailed to the promised land. F.A.R.M.S. support accelerated this work in the later stages.

In 1992 F.A.R.M.S. (with generous support from donors) and



Brigham Young University funded an expedition to evaluate the site. The expedition was postponed when permission from the Omani government to conduct ar-

continued on page 3

Foundation Plans Annual Dinner for Subscribers

The F.A.R.M.S. banquet, an annual event that brings together F.A.R.M.S. subscribers, volunteers, researchers, members of the board of directors, and many other friends of the Foundation, will be held this year on Friday, October 29.

The featured speaker will be Elder Dallin H. Oaks. In addition, F.A.R.M.S. board members will reflect on the nearly 15 years of F.A.R.M.S. projects and activities and report on the status of current projects.

The dinner will begin at 7:00 P.M. in room 375 of the Wilkinson Center at BYU. Reservations are required and may be made using the order form or by calling the F.A.R.M.S. office. Free parking is available in the parking lot next to the BYU Law school, directly east of the Wilkinson Center.

The Foundation looks forward to this opportunity to meet or become better acquainted with many of the people that support and carry out the work of F.A.R.M.S. and to share ideas and perspectives about the future of the Foundation.

The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies is a nonprofit research and educational organization dedicated to the study of ancient scripture. Your tax-deductible contributions enable F.A.R.M.S. to sponsor and coordinate a wide range of research projects that enhance our understanding of these sacred writings.

P.O. Box 7113, University Station, Provo, Utah 84602

Board of Directors

Stephen D. Ricks Chairman	Daniel C. Peterson
Brent Hall	Noel B. Reynolds
William J. Hamblin	Michael D. Rhodes
Donald W. Parry	Melvin J. Thorne
	John W. Welch

Officers and Staff

Noel B. Reynolds President	Brent Hall Director of Development
Melvin J. Thorne Vice President	Donald W. Parry Research Manager
Executive Editor	



F.A.R.M.S. UPDATE

The Foundation for Ancient Research & Mormon Studies

Number 90

September 1993

Can the 1834 Affidavits Attacking the Smith Family Be Trusted?

THE character and claims of Joseph Smith are fundamental to the claims of the Church he founded. Knowing this, critics of the Prophet have contended for more than a century and a half that he and his family were the kind of people from whom nobody would want to buy a used car, much less receive a plan of salvation.

The original anti-Mormon book, Eber D. Howe's 1834 *Mormonism Unveiled* [sic], featured affidavits gathered from former Smith neighbors by the excommunicated and bitter Philastus Hurlbut describing the Prophet's family as, among many other derogatory things, "lazy" and "indolent." Joseph Capron, for example, declared that the Smiths' "great object appeared to be, to live without work." "It was a mystery to their neighbors," said David Stafford, "how they got their living."¹

Over the past several decades, Mormon scholars have subjected these affidavits and other such alleged "reminiscences" to sharp criticism.² Nevertheless, these early documents have remained an anti-Mormon treasure trove to which generations of critics have turned and returned for years.

However, in a path-breaking article just recently published, Donald L. Enders, a senior curator at the Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City, presents had evidence that deals a serious blow to the credibility of the Hurlbut-Howe affidavits.³ Working from land and tax records, farm account books and related correspondence, soil surveys, horticultural studies, surveys of historic buildings, archaeological reports, and interviews with agricultural historians and other specialists—sources not generally used

by scholars of Mormon origins—Enders concludes that, on questions of testable fact, the affidavits cannot be trusted.

The Smith's farming techniques, it seems, were virtually a textbook illustration of the best recommendations of the day, showing them to have been, by contemporary standards, intelligent, skilled, and responsible people. And they were very hard working. To create their farm, for instance, the Smiths moved many tons of rock and cut down about 6,000 trees, a large percentage of which were one hundred feet or more in height and from four to six feet in diameter. Then they fenced their property, which required cutting at least six or seven thousand ten-foot rails. They did an enormous amount of work before they were able even to begin actual daily farming.

Furthermore, in order to pay for their farm, the Smiths were obliged to hire themselves out as day-laborers. Throughout the surrounding area, they dug and rocked up wells and cisterns, mowed, harvested, made cider and barrels and chairs and brooms and baskets, taught school, dug for salt, worked as carpenters and domestics, built stone walls and fireplaces, flailed grain, cut and sold cordwood, carted, washed clothes, sold garden produce, painted chairs and oil-cloth coverings, butchered, dug coal, and hauled stone. And, along the way, they produced between one thousand and seven thousand pounds of maple sugar annually. "Laziness" and "indolence" are difficult to detect in the Smith family.

What resulted from the Smiths' hard work? The 1830 tax records for Manchester Township appraise the family's holdings at the average level

per acre for farms in the vicinity. Of the ten farms owned by the Staffords, Stoddards, Chases, and Caprons—residents of the neighborhood who affixed their signatures prominently to affidavits denigrating the Prophet's family—only one was assessed as more valuable per acre than the Smiths'. The others received lower appraisals—and, in some cases, *significantly* lower ones.

The conclusion to be drawn? If the Hurlbut-Howe affidavits cannot be trusted on matters that can be quantified and tested, there seems little reason to trust their judgments in the less tangible matter of character. Clearly, they reflect religious hostility and perhaps envy from their less successful neighbors. As the Prophet's brother William expressed it, "We never knew we were bad folks until Joseph told his vision. We were considered respectable til then, but at once people began to circulate falsehoods and stories in wonderful ways."⁴

1. E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, OH: By the author, 1834), 262, 260, 249.
2. See, for example, Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Joseph Smith's New York Reputation Reappraised," *BYU Studies* 10 (Spring 1970): 283–314.
3. "The Joseph Smith, Sr., Family: Farmers of the Genesee," in Susan Easton Black and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds., *Joseph Smith: The Prophet, the Man* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1993), 213–25.
4. *Deseret Evening News*, 20 January 1894, p. 11; compare the verdict of Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois 1984), 190.

Daniel C. Peterson, based on research by Donald L. Enders

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Expedition Examines Wadi Sayq and Khor Kharfot

chaeological excavations on the site was held up, apparently due to sensitive negotiations between Yemen and Oman concerning their nearby border. Eventually the F.A.R.M.S. board of directors decided that a site survey without excavation could yield significant information and authorized the team to proceed.

Since excavation was not to be part of the expedition's work, the original team leader, David Johnson of BYU, whose major interest was excavation, was replaced by Noel Reynolds, the president of F.A.R.M.S., who was in Jerusalem at that time. Other members of the team included photographer Warren Aston; archaeologist Paolo Costa; and geologist William Christiansen.

The team assembled in Salalah, Oman, beginning April 10, 1993, and spent most of the following week on the site. The team's findings were reported in part by Costa at a meeting of the Seminar for Arabian Studies in London on July 24. We expect that further information about Khor Kharfot will be published soon in an article by Warren Aston in the *Ensign*.

FINDINGS

1. Khor Kharfot used to be a small harbor formed by a seasonal river flowing out of Wadi Sayq into the Indian Ocean. Though it is now blocked year round by a beach thrown up by the ocean, it may have been open to the sea as recently as the present century.

2. Though the port is now uninhabited, there are surface ruins

of dozens of structures. Minimally three different types which appear to correspond to ruins found elsewhere suggest at least occasional occupation of the general area over as much as a five-thousand-year period.

3. Even in the dry season, Khor Kharfot provides a sharp contrast to the arid land and sparse vegetation that characterize all areas a mile or further from the coastline. In the fall, after the summer monsoons, it is covered with a luxuriant green canopy. It features a variety of trees (including dates and figs), shrubs, flowers, and other plants. It is not yet known how the present ecosystem and plant species might differ from those of three thousand years ago. A Greek source describes a kind of tree growing in nearby Bahrain in 300 B.C. that when used to build boats would resist the water for 200 years or more.

4. Geological and archaeological evidence suggest that, as might be expected from the known gradual desiccation of the Arabian Peninsula over the last five thousand years, the present supply of fresh surface and spring water in Khor Kharfot is much less than in times past.

5. Wadi Sayq is unique among Omani wadis in that it runs due west and provides access to a Yemen plateau. This plateau leads directly west into the area long identified with the Nahum tribe. The center of this ancient tribal area is less than one-half degree off due west from Khor Kharfot. (After burying Ishmael at

Nahom, Lehi's party traveled nearly due east until they hit the sea.)

6. While remote and protected by rugged terrain and the ocean, Khor Kharfot is accessible in several ways. Though the wadi is protected from the view of passing vessels, due to the oblique angle at which it reaches the sea, it is a simple matter to land a boat there. While the coastline is quite rugged, it is possible to move up and down it on foot. This does, however, entail endless climbing up and down the mountainside to avoid impassable ravines. There is also an improved trail (possibly of ancient construction) which rises directly up the mountain from the springs, working its way between cliffs and rock outcroppings to the plateau above. These are all difficult trails which would be relatively simple to defend. The wadi itself provides an easy trail into the deep interior of the country, but is only readily accessible from the plateau at some distance from the coastline.

7. No obvious source of ore has been identified at or near the site. However, ancient Oman was a principal source of metals for the Mesopotamian empires. Copper mines first developed five thousand years ago are now being worked with modern machinery and methods. The basic geological features of the entire country are similar. The wadi area abounds in chert (flint), providing stones that will start a fire.

8. Ancient Oman was an international center for trade by sea.

Continued on page 4

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Khor Kharfot

Ships were built there to equip a commercial fleet that linked India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Africa, Egypt, and eventually China. Long before 600 B.C. the Omani seafarers were the Indian Ocean's equivalent of the Mediterranean's Phoenicians. In ancient times, it was the obvious place to build and launch a ship for a journey eastward into the Indian Ocean.

9. Khor Kharfot features a vast beach area, providing plenty of space to pitch tents. During the monsoon storms, the stone and thatch structures in the area may have been used as dwellings. It has been estimated that Lehi's party may have needed three years or more to build and adequately provision a ship for the Pacific crossing.

10. Khor Kharfot features several crop areas enclosed by stone fences and serviced by an irrigation system. While the present walls and canals probably date from the Islamic era, a similar farming system might well have preceded them.

11. Some apparently older ruins of probably less than a dozen small buildings, surrounded by a wall, lie above and beyond the rest. A trail (possibly constructed) leads down to the beach and main Wadi area. On the other sides this site is protected by high cliffs that drop straight into the sea and the mountain that rises directly behind it. Although the entire area is mountainous, this mountain would be the obvious one to call "the mountain." This site provides at ready hand a

Program Covers for Church Meeting Feature Book of Mormon Research

F.A.R.M.S. has helped to prepare program covers, suitable for sacrament meeting, baptisms, and other Church meetings, that feature information about the Book of Mormon on the back page. The idea for the covers came from Earl Carlsen of Spokane, and his encouragement and generous contributions have made the project possible.

The forms are printed by Graham Maughn Press in Provo. They are the standard size with full-color pictures of gospel scenes on the front, and they are blank on the inside, just like the forms many wards now use (see the enclosed sample). The difference is on the back, where F.A.R.M.S. research on the Book of Mormon has been printed.

This information is similar to

the F.A.R.M.S. Updates in each issue of *Insights*, but shorter and simpler. Brother Carlson believes that youth in particular will be interested in the information and that it may stimulate more study of the scriptures. F.A.R.M.S. has cooperated in the creation of the covers in the hopes that he is correct. Use of the covers should be cleared with local leaders.

The program covers are available in packets of 100 and each packet contains a different message. The first four packets are available on the order form, or you may order directly from Graham Maughn at 1-800-234-3355.

With the packets F.A.R.M.S. will send you a questionnaire asking you to report any effect that the information appears to have in your ward or stake.

perfect place for throwing an undesirable person to his death in the sea (see 1 Nephi 17:48).

CONCLUSION:

Khor Kharfot and its environs have all the features mentioned in the Book of Mormon in connection with Old World Bountiful. It has no features that would conflict with the Book of Mormon account. A survey of alternative sites in the Arabian Peninsula has turned up no others that come close to fitting the criteria for Bountiful so well. On this analysis, Khor Kharfot emerges as the most probable site for Lehi's Bountiful.

F.A.R.M.S. Tour to Israel Departs February 28, 1994

F.A.R.M.S. has arranged a tour to the Holy Land with Educational Opportunities, a tax-exempt organization sponsoring educational travel. The ten-day tour includes all accommodations and travel, plus informed lectures, including daily lectures from a F.A.R.M.S. board member. There are several departure points, and participants who recruit 5 others can travel free. For more details, request a complete brochure by using the order form or calling the F.A.R.M.S. office.

Computer Study Aid Makes Studying Book of Mormon More Meaningful

A new computer study aid, available for Windows™ on IBM-compatible computers, contains all the text of the Book of Mormon, making it easy to search for and see any word or verse in the book. But that's just the beginning.

The *Book of Mormon Computer Study Aid* provides many other helps to make your study of the Book of Mormon more meaningful. With a click of the mouse you can:

- Open a window showing a time line or maps that help to put the events of the Book of Mormon in historical and geographical context.
- Find passages by key events—another helpful way to find passages, in addition to searching by word or phrase.
- Make your own notes tied to a specific chapter or verse, which you can retrieve again whenever you

view that chapter or verse. These could be personal notes, lesson plan, or cross-references to other sources (such as F.A.R.M.S. papers)—whatever you want.

- Get on-line help that makes it easy to learn to use the features of the program and that gives cross-references to other helpful topics.
- Print any portion of the text of the Book of Mormon, the maps, and your notes.

The *Book of Mormon Computer Study Aid* is very easy to install and is so simple to use that a child can enjoy many of its benefits. It is also easy to customize to fit your needs: you can enlarge the text so that it is easier to read, or reduce the text so that more is displayed in the window.

The *Book of Mormon Computer Study Aid* has been developed by Rocky Mountain Laboratories and retails for \$24.95. It is made available by F.A.R.M.S. at a substantial discount.

New Video Features Nibley, King, and Riddle

Face to Face: The Education of Zion, a new video, has been filmed with support from F.A.R.M.S. and the College of Education of BYU. It was produced by Dennis Packard and directed by David Warner, with photography by Gordon Lonsdale and music composed and directed by Mack Wilberg.

Face to Face is available on the order form in this issue of *Insights*. Retailing for \$14.95, it is available on the order form at a substantial discount.

This one-hour video features interviews on the meaning of education in Zion with Arthur Henry King, professor emeritus of English at BYU and world-renowned Shakespeare scholar; Chauncey Riddle, professor emeritus of Philosophy at BYU and former Dean of the Graduate School and Assistant Academic Vice President; and Hugh Nibley, professor emeritus of Ancient Scripture at BYU and well known to F.A.R.M.S. readers. It also includes a panel discussion between the three.

The establishment of Zion, foretold in ancient and modern scripture, is above all a gathering of minds and hearts—an education of souls. It is this education that these three LDS scholars and educators have devoted themselves to pursuing and sharing. To be with them, face to face, and to hear them discuss the education of Zion, is an education in itself and a sweet taste of the Zion to come.

Speaking about the Title Page of the Book of Mormon, and by strong implication about the entire Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith said: “[It] is not by any means a modern composition, either of mine or of any other man who has lived or does live in this generation” (*History of the Church* 1:71).

Joseph’s declaration is just as pertinent today as it was the day it was spoken. Those who suggest that the Book of Mormon should be viewed as a nineteenth-century composition or that Joseph’s role was more author than translator should remember that the Prophet himself expressly rejected such suggestions.

Volunteers Create Fonts for Researchers

Scholars working with Egyptian and Coptic will benefit from a F.A.R.M.S. project nearing completion. Steve Booras, a team leader in testing with WordPerfect Corporation, has donated his time and expertise to create Type 1 Postscript fonts of Egyptian and Coptic.

These fonts can be used with programs on an IBM-compatible PC that can use Type 1 Postscript fonts, and they will print on most printers. The fonts are scalable from 4 points to 100 points. And if you are working with WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows or WordPerfect 6.0 for DOS, you will be able to see the characters on the screen as well.

The Egyptian font contains 744 characters and is based on Sir Alan Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar*. The font will be made even more useful by two WordPerfect macros being developed by Booras's son, Kimball Springall. One macro will combine Egyptian characters in stacks as necessary, adjusting the height of the characters to preserve the line

ΑΒϚϞΕΧΩΔΘΩΨΧΦΥΤΡΠΟΞΝΜΑΚΙϚϙϙ†ΓΖΗΖ

ΑΒϚϞΕΧΩΔΘΩΨΧΦΥΤΡΠΟΞΝΜΑΚΙϚϙϙ†ΓΖΗΖ

ΑΒϚϞΕΧΩΔΘΩΨΧΦΥΤΡΠΟΞΝΜΑΚΙϚϙϙ†ΓΖΗΖ

ΑΒϚϞΕΧΩΔΘΩΨΧΦΥΤΡΠΟΞΝΜΑΚΙϚϙϙ

ΑΒϚϞΕΧΩΔΘΩΨΧΦΥΤΡΠΟΞ
ϙ†ΓΖΗΖ

ΑΒϚϞΕΧΩΔΘΩΨΧ
ΟΞΝΜΑΚΙϚϙϙ†ΓΖΗ

ΑΒϚϞΕΧΩΔΘ
ΦΥΤΡΠΟΞΝΜΑ

height. Another will help create an Egyptian word list with English equivalents and insert the proper Egyptian characters into a document on demand.

F.A.R.M.S. appreciates the efforts of Booras and Springall in this year-and-a-half effort. Researchers interested in obtaining the fonts should contact the F.A.R.M.S. office.

Three New Books Announced

We are pleased to announce final arrangements for the publication of three books in the first part of 1994. The papers from the 1992 F.A.R.M.S. Symposium on the olive in the ancient world will be copublished by F.A.R.M.S. and Deseret Book early in 1994. Two books will be published in the spring: papers on temples in the ancient world presented at the 1993 F.A.R.M.S. Symposium, and the next volume in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, featuring Nibley's writings on Brigham Young.

In the meantime, we are making available separately two oft-requested transcripts from the 1993 symposium (to further whet your appetite for the entire collection): Nibley's remarks on Doctrine and Covenants 109, the "most enlightening treatment" on the temple, and Catherine Thomas's presentation on the brother of Jared. See the order form for details.

The Purpose of F.A.R.M.S.

The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S.) encourages and supports research about the Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ, and other ancient scriptures.

F.A.R.M.S. is a nonprofit educational foundation, independent of all other organizations. Its main research interests include ancient history, language, literature, culture, geography, politics, and law. Although such subjects are of secondary importance when compared with the spiritual and eternal messages of the scriptures, solid research and academic perspectives alone can supply certain kinds of useful information, even if only tentatively,

concerning many significant and interesting questions about the ancient backgrounds, origins, composition, and meanings of scripture.

The Foundation works to make interim and final reports about this research available widely, promptly, and economically. As a service to teachers and students of the scriptures, research results are distributed both in scholarly and popular formats.

It is hoped that this information will help all interested people to "come unto Christ" (Jacob 1:7) and to understand and take more seriously these ancient witnesses of the atonement of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.