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***from sdc***

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***Best Evidence For The Book of Mormon***

***What a 10-Year-Old Did for the Tar Sands***

***Coordinators for Minnesota Reading Corps and Minnesota Math Corps sought***

***This is not included for religious purposes but as there is going to be a lot of this topic, best to have several perspectives. sdc***

### **Best Evidence For The Book of Mormon**

What struck me when I first arrived in Cahokia was the incredible stink.

I had been called to serve in the Missouri-Independence Mission, but my first area, Plattsmouth, Nebraska, was far from any of the historic church locations I had expected to see when I got my call. Now, near the end of 1973, I had been transferred to my second location. I would spend my first winter as a missionary in smelly Cahokia, Illinois; as far from Far West or Independence or Adam-Ondi-Ahman as a guy could possibly get.

The small town of Cahokia was located next to East St. Louis on the Illinois side of the Mississippi river, famous for its slaughterhouses. The smell of bovine death and gore hovered in the air long after slaughtering had ceased for the day, floating up and mixing with the rancid smoke spewed from the smokestacks of the nearby Monsanto chemical plant, then slowly settling down over the hapless town of Cahokia to choke its residents while they slept. "It's something you just get used to," my new companion told me.

Had I known then what I know now, I would have been delighted to find myself in Cahokia instead of dreading it. As it turns out, I had landed smack dab in the middle of Book of Mormon Central and never even knew it.

My companion told me that Cahokia's claim to fame was some mysterious Indian mounds, humongous earthworks built up by long departed Illinois Indians for reasons no one remembers. We never did get around to seeing those mounds because (1) with the first November snow flurries arriving, it didn't seem an opportune time for sightseeing, and (2) I wasn't really interested. Who cared about some piles of dirt left behind by a tribe of long-dead Indians?

American Indian ruins didn't interest me, but if you really wanted to light me up in those days, just get me talking about Book of Mormon geography, which, as everyone knows, took place in south and central America. From my seminary days on, I had gobbled up everything I could learn about ancient Meso-America, and had even entertained the idea of studying to become an archaeologist so I could uncover

additional evidence that the people of Central and South America were descendants of the Nephites and Lamanites. My great dream was to one day visit the temple ruins at Chichen Itza and Teotihuacan.

Had I paid closer attention to the words of Joseph Smith when he spoke of the ancient inhabitants of this continent, I would have noticed that he said this continent, not the one below it. If I wanted to see real evidence of Book of Mormon archaeology, I would have been looking in the wrong place chasing after the Mayans and the Aztecs. As it turns out, some of the best evidence on earth for what I was interested in was right there on the outskirts of Cahokia. And I just blew it off.

I was not alone in not having figured that out. The problem with trying to place cities described in the Book of Mormon anywhere in North America is that there had always seemed to be no evidence whatsoever that advanced civilizations ever existed here. Until fairly recently, that is. As I learned watching the documentary [Lost Civilizations of North America](#), even most historians were unaware of the -pardon my pun- mounds of evidence right under their noses.

Such was the case with Dr. Roger Kennedy. He was a professor of American history who was shocked to learn, in 1991, that massive ancient city remains were known to exist all over North America. This guy was the director of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, and he was just finding out. I think you and I can be excused for not having heard.

Interviewed for Lost Civilizations, Dr. Kennedy says, "Very, very few of us were conscious of the immensity of Monk's Mound at Cahokia which is bigger in its footprint than the great pyramid at Giza. We didn't know that."

Evidence of huge cities with advanced architecture was once abundant from New York and the Great Lakes area, down through Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee, Georgia, and points in between.

"It's what I call 'hidden cities,' " says professor Kennedy, "I use the term because these were very big places. There were more people, we now know, in Cahokia across from St. Louis, than there were in London or Rome. There were major population centers in what now are Nashville, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis. There were tens of thousands of architectural consequences that are now hidden behind our junk and our architectural achievements."

Lost Civilizations of North America (you can watch the trailer [here](#)) is not a film about Book of Mormon evidence. The makers of the documentary are more interested in discovering why it is that modern Native Americans have had their heritage kept from them, and how all this became lost to history. How is it that these "world class

achievements" in the words of Professor Alice Kehoe, which were quite commonly known of two hundred years ago, became so thoroughly forgotten?

To colonial Americans, these structures were commonplace. They were literally everywhere. But they didn't stay in place forever. A farmer faced with a ten foot rock wall in the middle of his claim is either going to have to plow around it or take it down. Most took them down. Farmers were uncovering enough arrowheads as they plowed the land to fill bushel baskets, but where archaeologists would see evidence of a massive battle, the farmer saw only a never-ending nuisance.

In some instances, as happened repeatedly in what is now St. Louis, small treasures or artifacts were found buried near or within these mounds, which resulted in entire communities coming together to level the mounds in hopes of finding more. In other cases, deliberate and wanton destruction of structures took place for no reason other than the conviction that nothing good could have come from the Indians. From an estimated 20-30,000 mounds and structures known to be in existence in George Washington's day, we have the remains of only about 1100 left. [The largest known plot of mounds and roads survives today only because the area was preserved within a golf course](#) at Newark, Ohio.

### **Why Haven't We Known?**

On my one and only visit to the Smithsonian Museum, I was surprised to learn that there is a ton of stuff at the Smithsonian that no one has yet gotten around to examining and cataloging. The basement of the Smithsonian actually does resemble, to some degree, that fictional government warehouse seen at the end of Raiders of the Lost Ark. There exist unopened crates that no one knows the contents of. This was the case with most of the evidence of those large North American cities. Volumes of maps, descriptions, sketches, artifacts, and even hundreds of scrolls containing pre-columbian writing were simply lying around unexamined. And not just at the Smithsonian.

According to Wayne May, publisher of [Ancient American Magazine](#), "Every museum, small or big, has a great quantity of stuff that is boxed up that hasn't seen the light of day for literally hundreds of years."

Modern archaeologists examining the sites of these ancient cities attribute them to a civilization known as the Hopewell Indians which covered a large swath of the interior of North America. It's important to note that the Hopewells were not one particular tribe. The name "Hopewell" derives from a farm which was the site of an early archaeological dig. What is known as the [Hopewell Tradition](#) embraces an entire, broad Native American culture, which takes in what are presumed to be the ancestors of a large number of modern tribes. These people appear to overlap with those of the Algonquins, another broad category containing the Arapaho, Blackfeet,

Cheyenne, Delawares, Mohican, M'ik Mak, Shawnee, Ojibwa, and a score of other lesser-known tribes.

### **The Only Good Indian...**

Some of the earliest Christian immigrants to America took seriously the biblical mandate to treat others as they themselves would want to be treated. To them, the doctrine of Christ meant reaching out to others in love, and that included especially the "savage brutes" they found on these shores. Indians and white men living together in a spirit of respectful cooperation is the tradition we inherit from our pilgrim forbears. America, to the true Christian, was destined to become the shining city on a hill, beckoning other nations to profit by its example of living by the golden rule.

But all sweet fruit eventually turns to rot, and by the 19th century, the once pure doctrine of American Exceptionalism came to mean "everybody else better get the hell out of our way." A new doctrine corrupted that of the shining example: [Manifest Destiny](#), which claimed that it was God's will that the white Christian dominate the continent. Certain people were superior, and certain others were inferior. [That's just the way God manifested His will.](#) The destiny of the Americans was to conquer and prevail, and the destiny of others was to humbly submit.

The native inhabitants of the land were no longer seen as God's children deserving our succor, but mere savages who stood in the way of the national land grab. It was now perfectly okay to push them out of the way, or even exterminate them if they resisted. This push toward genocide was enthusiastically endorsed by the United States government. "What about the good Injuns?" someone is said to have inquired of General Sheridan, "Do we kill them too?"

"The only good Injun I ever saw," answered the General, "was dead."

Mormon teachings, of course, were diametrically opposed to this way of thinking. In the words of [Bruce Porter](#), "Joseph Smith claimed that the Native Americans were, in fact, just like the rest of us: Just as good, just as valuable, and just as important as all of the rest of us."

The spirit of [Manifest Destiny](#) pushing the unwanted Indians off her precious land. But by the time this rebranding of [American Exceptionalism](#) was taking hold, [Joseph Smith](#) was long dead, and few Americans would have been swayed by his arguments. To those adopting this revamping of American purpose, it was essential to view the red man as subhuman, with none of the rights God's grace bestowed on whites. Shane Mountjoy, author of [Manifest Destiny](#), explains the reason for the shift. "19th century Americans would have found it more than inconvenient," he says, "Politically it would have been impossible for them to have taken lands away from any indigenous

peoples if they viewed them as having rights even close to what they had as American citizens."

But Wayne May introduces a bit of a dilemma. "As archaeology developed as a new science, and anthropology as a new science, they would find these things, these evidences to show that there was a written language, that these people possibly did smelt iron, they did smelt copper and they mined it; they carried it in trade over great distances. These were signs of a higher civilization. And that higher civilization idea coming from our scientific community of the day came into direct conflict with the manifest destiny ideas put forth by the U.S. government."

Lost Civilizations of North America provides a fascinating description of how the solution to this dilemma was achieved. The most powerful American scientist of the day was effectively bought off by the federal government in order that Manifest Destiny might roll forth unimpeded. (Insert from Toni - we all know who the original instigator of hiding the truth from us is. I'm sure his influence was a great part of this horrendous atrocity). Here then is John Wesley Powell in his book [On The Limits of the Use of Some Anthropologic Data](#), published by the Smithsonian Institution (government funded, in case you didn't know):

"Hence it will be seen that "it is illegitimate to use any pictographic matter of a date anterior to the continent by Columbus for historic purposes." (Emphasis mine.)

In other words, nothing historical that predates the white man counts. Such things are henceforth not to be discussed in polite scientific circles. For all intents and purposes, all discoveries linking the Indians to a civilized past ceased to exist. The red man is a savage, and always has been; that was official United States policy, backed up by a declaration from the Smithsonian's own Grand Poobah.

But what about those hundreds of scrolls that proved Indians once had a written language?

Sorry, off limits.

Artifacts, statues, and stone tablets?

Facts not in evidence.

Lost Civilizations tells us how the effects of that ruling are still felt today:

"Native Americans even today suffer from this policy, which effectively meant that Native Americans have no history...You only have a history if it's something written down. If you have an oral tradition, that doesn't count as history."

What seems to have bothered Powell most about those pictographs is that some of them contained symbols which strongly resembled characters in ancient Hebrew and Egyptian hieroglyphs. Similarities between the East coast [M'ik Mag](#) hierglyphs and those of ancient Egyptian are particularly striking, because not only are the symbols

similar, but the translations are eerily close as well. If these scrolls were to be closely scrutinized and scientists were to announce those discoveries, it might suggest that, as some Americans had been proposing, American Indians were actually descended from old world stock and the case could be made that the red man had the same rights and privileges as the European settlers.

A good many Americans claimed either English or Scots-Irish ancestry, and it was widely understood in those days that Albion's seed were descended from the house of Israel through Ephraim. If it were to become widely accepted that the Indians were also sons of Abraham, the jig would be up. There would be no more lording it over the Indian, no matter how savage his present ways.

So all those pictographs were crated up and carted down to the sub-sub-basement of the Smithsonian and also left abandoned in the nooks and crannies of other museum basements across America. It doesn't take long for things like this to vanish from history. All it takes is for the ones who boxed the stuff up to die off, then there's no one left to remember.

You don't have to be a Mormon to notice anthropological similarities between the cultures of the Hopewell Indians and the middle east. There are a whole bunch of scholars and amateur archaeologists who have no interest in the Book of Mormon, yet surmise from the available evidence that ancient Native Americans such as the Hopewell civilization might have traded, intermingled, or even originated from other cultures. These scholars are known as Diffusionists, and their theories are as varied as those of other disciplines. Some are convinced that these connections were the result of trade between ancient Americans and the seagoing Phoenicians, while others propose other theories. What they have in common is the belief that contact between the Americas and other geographies may have taken place before Columbus.

#### That Sticky DNA Problem

Probably one of the better reasons to look at a North American setting for the Book of Mormon rather than the Central American theory is the recent discovery that little or no middle eastern DNA has been found among the native people in South America.

If anything, DNA tests appear to show that the South American Indigenous tribes have more in common with the Japanese than they do with the Jews. On the other hand, tests of DNA obtained from cemeteries known to contain bodies from the Ojibwa tribe have demonstrated a link between the Hopewell and a people known to have lived at Galilee. Since I'm no good at either understanding or explaining DNA research, here's a clip of from the film Lost Civilizations featuring DNA expert Debbie Bolnick summarizing her own findings:

It should be noted that Professor Bolnick, being the pure scientist that she is, has not been happy with the way some religionists have promoted her comments to support their own religious theories (such as I'm doing here). Since appearing in this documentary she has signed a letter distancing herself from some of the conclusions arrived at by the filmmaker. That's fine. I think her words speak for themselves. Besides, I don't see that the makers of Lost Civilizations of North America have put forth any particular religious view whatsoever.

## Best Evidence

If you're looking for a compelling step-by-step presentation of the evidence for Hebrew-based civilizations on the North American continent geared specifically to latter-day Saints, you'll want to check out the website of [the FIRM Foundation](#). I've just finished watching their five disc [Book of Mormon Evidence Series](#) and I'm happy to announce [that my love affair with the temples at Teotihuacan is officially over](#). What were we thinking, anyway, always featuring that architecture in our media as though a site widely believed to have been used for human sacrifices was somehow indicative of Nephite culture?

[Kieth Merrill](#), director of the church film [The Testaments](#), kind of wishes he could make that movie over again, this time [using a proper North America setting](#). Artist David Lindsley, whose painting "Behold Your Little Children" is well known to most latter-day Saints, actually created a re-do of his famous work, replacing that stupid stone temple in the background with a more accurate Cahokia-style structure:

Rod Meldrum, who narrates the video presentation, has done what I consider to be an incredible job of distilling the latest archaeological and anthropological evidence of the North American setting and explaining how some of these sites could match up with descriptions of events in the Book of Mormon. Here's a short sample:

Meldrum and other researchers have been quite thorough in exploring every imaginable facet of the possibility of a North American setting for the Book of Mormon, and I am convinced they're onto something here. (Insert from Toni- I have had my own personal witness of the truthfulness of the Nephites living in AMERICA - the most POWERFUL witness of anything I've had in my entire lifetime!). [Many of us who have long bought into the Meso-American view have done so because that appeared to be the only game in town](#). Still, believing that Book of Mormon events took place in Central and South America required a lot of mental acrobatics, not the least of which was the presumption that there must have been two Hill Cumorahs. Since that final Book of Mormon battle "obviously" took place in South America and the plates were discovered in New York, the theory went, the main hill Cumorah was somewhere in Meso-America near where the final battle took place, afterwhich Moroni schlepped the

gold plates all the way up the hemisphere to upstate New York and buried them in a hill he named after that other hill back home.

Like I say, making all that fit required some suspension of belief. Like assuming the Isthmus of Panama was the location for the narrow neck of land. That area might look narrow to us on a map, but to the people living there it feels anything but narrow. I lived for three years on the island of Oahu, and although I knew it was an Island, it never seemed like one to those of us who lived there. The Book of Mormon describes the narrow neck of land as capable of being crossed by foot in a day and a half. That fits the location Meldrum shows us near the Great Lakes much better than the Central American version, and makes a lot more sense.

E.G. Squire was one of those 19th century Americans who spent his life painstakingly describing and recording those many archaeological anomalies. In one of his books published in 1851, [Antiquities of the State of New York](#), Squire described how locals uncovered huge mass graves containing thousands of skeletons of men, women, and children seemingly tossed indiscriminately into those pits. The bones crumbled at the slightest touch. These huge bone pits were located in Western New York, right where you would expect them to be in relation to the hill Cumorah.

As for the whereabouts of all those weapons? Don't make me have to explain the obvious. As recently as my own childhood it was still a popular pastime for boys to go out into the woods to hunt for arrowheads. The pickings were getting thinner by then, but it used to be that no matter what part of the country you lived in, arrowheads and spear points were plentiful virtually everywhere, usually just inches under the dirt, and often just lying on the ground. It was like collecting rocks.

Meldrum's North American setting provides explanations for things described in the Book of Mormon that haven't been satisfactorily reconciled by an acceptance of the Meso-American view, such as snow, hail, tornadoes, and the availability of timber. Not to mention the wide availability of cattle, horses, and yes, even elephants. This set of screen prints gives a pretty good idea of some of the the topics covered:

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### **What a 10-Year-Old Did for the Tar Sands**

By Angela Sterritt, YES! Magazine      24 June 12

### ***Why a First Nations student from British Columbia is taking on a controversial trans-Canadian pipeline project - through song.***

Ten-year-old Ta'Kaiya Blaney stood outside Enbridge Northern Gateway's office on July 6, waiting for officials to grant her access to the building. She thought she could hand deliver an envelope containing an important message about the company's pipeline construction. But the doors remained locked.



"I don't know what they find so scary about me," she said, as she was ushered off the property by security guards. "I just want them to hear what I have to say."

The Sliammon First Nation youth put in a great effort learning about environmental issues and the pipeline in particular, and hoped to share her knowledge and carefully crafted words. Enbridge officials said they were unable to provide Ta'Kaiya space or time and failed to comment because the Vancouver office is staffed by a limited number of technical personnel. Their headquarters are located in Calgary.

So Ta'Kaiya stood outside, accompanied by three members of Greenpeace, her mother, and a number of reporters and sang her song "Shallow Waters." The song's video has hit YouTube and been viewed more than 53,000 times.

She co-wrote her song after learning of Enbridge's bid to build twin 1,170 km pipelines to transport oil from the Alberta tar sands to British Columbia's north coast. Like the proposed [TransCanada Keystone XL pipeline](#) that would connect the Canadian tar sands to the U.S. Gulf Coast, Enbridge's Alberta-B.C. pipeline is widely opposed, largely because it would bring hundreds of oil supertankers a year to the Great Bear Rainforest - an ecologically significant region along a particularly dangerous route for tankers.

"Oil pipelines and tankers will give people jobs, but if there is an oil spill like the [BP spill] in the Gulf of Mexico, that will take other people's jobs and the wildlife will die," said Ta'Kaiya.

According to a Greenpeace website, "Twenty-two years after the Exxon Valdez tragedy, crude still coats Alaska's shores. Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council estimates that 21,000 gallons of the 11 million gallons of crude oil that bled from the stranded tanker Exxon Valdez on the night of March 23, 1989 remain in the subsurface."

And Dustin Johnson, a Tsimshian youth who works at the Sierra Club in Edmonton, says that the tankers that are proposed to transport tar sands crude from northern Alberta to the B.C. north coast are much larger than the Exxon Valdez. "If the tar sands pipelines are successfully built on the coast," he said, "this would lead to at least 250 tankers per year navigating the intricate B.C. coastline - a risk the salmon- and ocean-dependent Northwest coast communities and economies cannot afford to make."

Greenpeace reports that 80 percent of British Columbians support an oil tanker ban in B.C.'s coastal waters. More than 70 First Nations in British Columbia have banned the transport of tar sands oil through their territories, including along the proposed oil tanker routes.

While Ta'Kaiya was waiting outside for Enbridge officials, B.C. Premier Christy Clark sent the girl an email, saying she had "watched your YouTube video and commend you for your talent. Your message is very clear - we must be concerned about the environment."

Clark said the B.C. government supports the ongoing environmental review, a process that has met much criticism from First Nations communities, environmental groups, and political leaders.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., opponents of a different project - the Keystone XL Pipeline - are preparing for two weeks of mass civil disobedience at the White House with the hopes of convincing President Obama to stop it in its tracks.

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We're currently looking for an amazing person to take on the role as one of our metro program **coordinators for Minnesota Reading Corps and Minnesota Math Corps**. See job description below. Priority will be given to applications received by Wednesday the 27th at [cfankhanel@mnedc.org](mailto:cfankhanel@mnedc.org) subject: Program Coordinator application.

Please circulate! Christine

### **POSITION SUMMARY**

The Program Coordinator is responsible for recruitment, selection, placement and retention of a cohort of AmeriCorps members at designated Math and Reading Corps service sites. After placement the Program Coordinator provides members and service sites the support necessary to ensure program integrity and successful completion of the AmeriCorps term of service.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Recruitment & Selection:** Work collaboratively with a team of Coordinators to recruit, select and train a cohort of Math and Reading Corps members, including screening, interviewing and site placement.

### **Site and Member Support:**

- Develop and oversee maintenance of productive working relationships between sites, including principals, members, and master & internal coaches. Work closely with all partners to ensure open effective communication and successful implementation of the program model.
- Serve as the primary point of contact for a cohort of approximately 70 members. Proactively address programming, interpersonal, member performance, and AmeriCorps compliance issues in order to ensure attainment of member retention objectives (95%).
- Staff regular member and coach training sessions to cultivate service commitment, motivation, and reinforce relationships. Assist with session logistics.
- Build site capacity to manage the programs and facilitate creation of successful long term relationships with stakeholders including service sites (e.g., principals, internal coaches, teachers, district personnel), members, alumni, community partners, funders and the media.
- Ensure member and site contract compliance through proactive, clear communication and reinforcement of program expectations.
- Conduct site visits as necessary with members and internal coaches.
- Communicate regularly with internal coaches regarding site implementation and member progress toward completion of program requirements.
- Prepare bi-weekly member updates and monthly internal coach updates to highlight news and disseminate member stories.
- Provide staffing and input for member professional development over the course of the program year.

### **Additional Responsibilities:**

- Oversee complete and timely collection of in-kind donations from service sites.

- Attend Metro Team, Math & Reading Corps, and all-staff meetings.
- Participate in working groups and/or task forces to ensure cross pollination of ideas, best practices and continuous improvement strategies.
- Other Duties as assigned.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

- Bachelor's degree in nonprofit management, business, education or related field and a minimum of 1 year experience in program coordination. Previous national service experience highly desirable.
- Proven interpersonal skills including the ability to solve problems, mediate conflict and exercise sound judgment.
- Experience with recruitment and selection, preferably in a nonprofit or government setting.
- Demonstrated success in creating partnerships and working in a collaborative environment.
- Ability to balance multiple priorities and deadlines in a fast-paced evolving environment.
- Experience working with diverse communities.
- Ability to structure tasks, establish priorities and set and manage goal achievement.
- Proficiency with MS Office. Previous database experience preferred.
- Familiarity with or interest in literacy, education, and/or social causes.

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

- Typical office environment.
- Time spent on the computer is approximately 60%.
- Valid driver's license and ability to travel frequently to a variety of locations throughout the Metro area.

*EEO/Affirmative Action Employer*

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