Joseph Smith made several comments concerning Book of Mormon geography throughout his life which support both a North American setting,[[1]](#endnote-2) and Central American setting. Not only this, but he allowed several opinions of North, South, Central, and Hemispheric geography of The Book of Mormon to be published, taught, and re-published without any correction. I believe this can be explained that Joseph did not \*know\* exactly where The Book of Mormon took place, so as he and others read about and learned traditions of any Indians that resembled anything in The Book of Mormon, they assumed that they were part of Book of Mormon people. It seems they believed that The Book of Mormon took place over all of the Western continent so any and all Indian cultures in North and South America (the Hemispheric geography theory), were Book of Mormon peoples. I believe this because the statements made in Joseph Smiths lifetime are consistently all over the Western Hemisphere, and not secluded to one area over the other.

I have made note of several statements made in Joseph Smiths lifetime on geography of The Book of Mormon, from Joseph Smith, Apostles and other leaders, those whom he allowed to publish in the *Times and Seasons*, and other Church publications, statements Joseph Smith made to others, and some newspapers which recorded what early missionaries were teaching about it. I have not included quotes that use terms like “this continent”,[[2]](#endnote-3) “this country”,[[3]](#endnote-4) and “This land”,[[4]](#endnote-5) as the only designation to geography of The Book of Mormon, because these terms were used sometimes to denote North America, and other times Central America. Cumorah statements were left out because of the controversial matter and the possibility of two Cumorahs.

This also is not an exhaustive summary of early statements, but there is enough information to answer the question of what the early beliefs and teachings of the saints in Joseph Smiths time were.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mesoamerica | North America | South America | Hemispheric |
| 1830 | - | - | - | 1 |
| 1831 | - | 1 | - | - |
| 1832 | 1 | 1 | - | 2 |
| 1833 | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| 1834 | - | 2 | - | - |
| 1835 | - | 3 | - | 1 |
| 1838 | - | 2 | - | - |
| 1840 | 1 | - | 1 | 1 |
| 1841 | 5 | 1 | - | - |
| 1842 | 5 | 1 | - | 2 |
| 1843 | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| 1844 | - | - | - | 2 |
| Total | 14 | 12 | 1 | 10 |
|  | | | | |

1830 Nov., taught by Missionaries, Hemispheric setting \*\*\* The Lehites “landed on the coast of Chili [*sic*] 600” B.C.,and from them descended all the Indians of America.”[[5]](#endnote-6)

1831 Feb. taught by Missionaries, North American setting \*\*\* “An early account mentioned that the missionaries asked the ‘brethren of the reformation…to receive their mission and book as from heaven, which they said chiefly concerned the western Indians, as being an account of their origin, and a prophecy of their final conversion to [C]hristianity, and made them a white and delightsome people, and be reinstated in the possessing of their lands of which they have been despoiled by the whites’” [[6]](#endnote-7)

1832 March, taught by Missionaries Hemispheric setting \*\*\* This article mentions Lehi landing in South America, and the final battles between the Nephites and Lamanites were “fought nigh to the straits of Darien, and the last at a hill called Comoro”[[7]](#endnote-8)

1832 April, taught by Orson Pratt, Hemispheric setting \*\*\* "Six hundred years before Christ a certain prophet called Lehi went out to declare and promulgate the prophecies to come; he came across the water into South America." He continues" The last battle that was fought among these parties was on the very ground where the plates were found, but it had been a running battle, for they commenced at the Isthmus of Darien and ended at Manchester."[[8]](#endnote-9)

1832 Oct., taught by W.W. Phelps, Central and North American setting \*\*\* “from the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains…Jaredites were in their glory upon this choice land above all others…This place may be called the centre of America: It being about an equal distance  
from Maine, to Nootka sound; and from the gulf of St. Lawrence to the gulf of California; yes,  
and about the middle of the continent from cape Horn, south, to the head land at Barra’s Bay,  
north. The world will never value the land of Desolation, as it is called in the book of Mormon,  
for any thing more than hunting ground, for want of lumber and mill-seats: The Lord to the  
contrary notwithstanding, declares it to be the land Zion which is the land of Joseph, blessed by  
him.”[[9]](#endnote-10)

1833 Feb., taught by W.W. Phelps, Central American setting \*\*\* From the article “DISCOVERY OF ANCIENT RUINS IN CENTRAL AMERICA”

“We are glad to see the proof begin to come, of the original or ancient inhabitants of this continent. It is good testimony in favor of the book of Mormon, and the book of Mormon is good testimony that such things as cities and civilization, ‘prior to the fourteenth century,’ existed in America”[[10]](#endnote-11)

1833 Feb., taught by Joseph Smith, North American setting \*\*\* "By it, we learn, that our western tribes of Indians, are descendants from that Joseph that was sold into Egypt, and that the land of America is a promised land unto them, and unto it, all the tribes of Israel will come, with as many of the gentiles as shall comply with the requisitions of the new covenant."[[11]](#endnote-12)

1834 June, taught by Joseph Smith, North American setting \*\*\* "wandering over the plains of the Nephites, recounting occasionally the history of the Book of Mormon, roving over the mounds of that once beloved people of the Lord, picking up their skulls & their bones, as proof of its divine authenticity."[[12]](#endnote-13)

1834 June, taught by Joseph Smith, North American setting\*\*\* The Zelph incident: During Zions march, several members discovered the skeleton of a man, Joseph Smith stated “His name was Zelph. He was a warrior and chieftain under the great prophet Onandagus, who was known from the Hill Cumorah, or eastern sea to the Rocky mountains.”[[13]](#endnote-14)

1835 Nov., taught by W.W. Phelps, North America setting \*\*\* “Around that mount [Cumorah] died millions of the Jaredites; yea, there ended one of the greatest nations of this earth. In that day, her inhabitants spread from sea to sea, and enjoyed national greatness and glory, nearly fifteen hundred years.-That people forsook the Lord and died in wickedness. There, too, fell the Nephites, after they had forgotten the Lord that bought them.”[[14]](#endnote-15)

1835 Oct., taught by W.W. Phelps, Hemispheric setting\*\*\*

“My last letter was mainly confined to the book of Mormon, which rarely fails to bring to my mind something about the Indians, whose history and doings, upon this western continent, it unfolds as plainly, as the bible does those of the Israelites on the eastern continent....

When I read the book of Mormon and reflect upon the mercy and goodness of God, in sparing some of the seed of Joseph upon this choice land of America: and consider his wisdom and love in preserving a record of the progenitors or fathers of this now smitten and dejected people, I cannot find the requisite terms to convey my thanks to such an all wise Being!...[there are] “thirty tribes, containing a population of 156,310, have held treaties with the United States, and that there is an Indian population east of the Mississippi, of 92,676,”—making a total of 405,286. Now allowing the same number west of the Mountains, and suppose 800,000, in the northern regions of the Canadas, and 500,000 in South America, there will be 2,110,562 of the sons of Joseph, and of the remnants of the Jews”[[15]](#endnote-16)

1835 Nov., taught by Joseph Smith, North America setting \*\*\* “The Book of Mormon is a record of the forefathers of our western tribes of Indians…By it [The Book of Mormon] we learn that our western tribes of Indians are descendants of Joseph that was sold into Egypt…”[[16]](#endnote-17)

1835 July, taught by Oliver Cowdery, North American setting \*\*\* Regarding Cumorah in New York, “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”[[17]](#endnote-18)

1838 Sept., taught by Joseph Smith North American setting \*\*\* The camp passed through Huntsville, in Randolph County [Missouri], which has been appointed as one of the Stakes of Zion,and is the ancient site of the City of Manti....[[18]](#endnote-19)

1838, taught by Joseph Smith, North American setting \*\*\* “He [Lyman 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)…”[[19]](#endnote-20)

1840, taught by Orson Pratt, South American setting/landing \*\*\* “Mentions ‘the western coast of South America’ as the site of Lehis landing”[[20]](#endnote-21)

1840 Sept., taught by Parley P. Pratt, Hemispheric setting \*\*\* Asks if anyone would like proof of The Book of Mormon, just look at “the ruins of cities, towns, military roads, forts, fortifications, mounds, artificial caves, temples, statues, monuments, obelisks, hieroglyphics, sculptured altars, aqueducts, and an endless variety of articles of husbandry, cooking utensils, &c. &c. which are the product of some ancient race, who inhabited that land, and who had risen to a high state of refinement in the arts and sciences, as the relics of their labours prove-as they *now lie scattered over a vast extent of North and South America*, either on the surface, or buried beneath by the convulsions of nature, or the visitations of the Most High, as recorded in the fore-going extract; and which are frequently discovered and brought to light by antiquarian travellers.” (emphasis added)[[21]](#endnote-22)

1840 Sept., Edited by Parley P. Pratt, Central American setting \*\*\* “We learn from the New York Express, that Mr. Stephens, United States Charge to Guatemala, and Mr. Catherwood, of the Panorama, have met with most encouraging success at the outset of their researches for antiquities in Central America. At Quiragua they made the following discoveries: [quotes from article about discoveries] For further testimony and proof positive of the Book of Mormon, we copy the following [Testimony of Three Witnesses].”[[22]](#endnote-23)

1841, taught by Orson Spencer, Central American setting \*\*\*John Lloyd Stephens “*Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan”* influenced Orson Spencers decision to be baptized into the Church, and describes it as an “external evidence” of The Book of Mormon. Orson Spencer served for twelve years in the Baptist Church before his conversion and William Mulder used Orson as one of the examples of a highly educated person who joined the Church in Joseph Smiths time.[[23]](#endnote-24) In a letter to a former clergy member William Crowell, dated November 17, 1842, Spencer relates what aided in his conversion to the faith. He relates about his baptism in 1841 “As you enquire [inquire] after the reasons that operated to change my mind to the present faith, I only remark that Stevens' Travels had some influence, as an external evidence of the truth of the Book of Mormon.”[[24]](#endnote-25)

1841 May, taught by Charles Thompson, North American setting \*\*\*“I will next introduce the descriptions of some of these ancient fortifications and military works [in Eastern United States] of defence, as recorded in the American Antiquities, by Josiah Priest, and also introduce a history of the building of these fortifications and works of defence, as recorded in the Book of Mormon;”[[25]](#endnote-26)

1841 June, Editor of Times and Seasons, Central American setting \*\*\*In June 1841, the article “American Antiquities—More Proofs of the Book of Mormon” was published in the Times and Seasons, reading "We feel great pleasure in laying before our readers the following interesting account of the Antiquities of Central America, which have been discovered by two eminent travelers who have spent considerable labor, to bring to light the remains of ancient buildings, architecture &c., which prove beyond controversy that, on this vast continent once flourished a mighty people, skilled in the arts and sciences, and whose splendor would not be eclipsed by any of the nations of Antiquity—a people once high and exalted in the scale of intelligence, but now like their ancient buildings, fallen into ruins" and then quotes an article from the New York Herald on a two part lecture Catherwood and Stephens on their travels and discovery in Mesoamerica.[[26]](#endnote-27)

1841 Sept., taught by Wilford Woodruff, Central American setting \*\*\* “I felt truly interested in this work for it brought to light a flood of testimony in proof of the book of mormon in the discovery & survey of the city Copan in Central America…”[[27]](#endnote-28)

1841 Sept., taught by Charles Wandell, Central American setting \*\*\*In a letter by Charles W. Wandell published in the Times and Seasons, he draws the comparison of the “glyphs of Otolum,” (Palenque) to the characters on the Anthon manuscript.[[28]](#endnote-29)

1841 Nov., taught by Joseph Smith, Central American setting \*\*\*

“Dear Sir, I received your kind present by the hand of Er Woodruff & feel myself under many obligations for this mark of your esteem & friendship which to me is the more interesting as it unfolds & developes many things that are of great importance to this generation & corresponds with & supports the testimony of the Book of Mormon; I have read the volumes with the greatest interest & pleasure & must say that of all histories that have been written pertaining to the antiquities of this country it is the most correct luminous & comprihensive.-…”[[29]](#endnote-30)

1842 Feb., taught by Parley P. Pratt, Central American setting \*\*\* --After an article titled "Ruins in Central America. Ancient Monument at Copan", quoting many parts of, and reviewing *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan*, Parley P. Pratt added:

“We publish the foregoing for the purpose of giving our readers some ideas of the antiquities of the Nephites--of their ancient cities, temples, monuments, towers, fortifications, and inscriptions now in ruin amid the solitude of an almost impenetrable forest; but fourteen hundred years since, in the days of Mormon, they were the abodes of thousands and millions of human beings, and the centre of civil and military operations unsurpassed in any age or country.

It is a striking and extraordinary coincidence, that, in the Book of Mormon, commencing page 563, there is an account of many cities as existing among the Nephites on the "narrow neck of land which connected the north country with the south country;" and Mormon names a number of them, which were strongly fortified, and were the theatres of tremendous battles, and that finally the Nephites were destroyed or driven to the northward, from year to year, and their towns and country made most desolate, until the remnant became extinct on the memorable heights of Cumorah (now western New York),--I say it is remarkable that Mr. Smith, in translating the Book of Mormon from 1827 to 1830, should mention the names and circumstances of those towns and fortifications in this very section of country, where a Mr Stephens, ten years afterwards, penetrated a dense forest, till then unexplored by modern travellers, and actually fines the ruins of those very cities mentioned by Mormon.

The nameless nation of which he speaks were the Nephites.

The lost record for which he mourns is the Book of Mormon.

The architects, orators, statesmen, and generals, whose works and monuments he admires, are, Alma, Moroni, Helaman, Nephi, Mormon, and their cotemporaries.

The very cities whose ruins are in his estimation without a name, are called in the Book of Mormon, "Teancum, Boaz, Jordan, Desolation," &c.”[[30]](#endnote-31)

May 1842, taught by Joseph Smith, North American setting\*\*\* In the editorial “A Catacomb of Mummies Found in Kentucky”, Joseph Smith said “Had Mr. Ash in his researches consulted the Book of Mormon his problem would have been solved, and he would have found no difficulty in accounting for the mummies being found in the above mentioned case…This art was no doubt transmitted from Jerusalem to this continent, by the before mentioned emigrants, which accounts for the finding of the mummies, and at the same time is another strong evidence of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon.—Ed."[[31]](#endnote-32)

1842 June, taught by Joseph Smith, Hemispheric setting \*\*\* “the Mexican records agree so well with the words of the book of Ether (found by the people of Limhi, which is contained in the Book of Mormon) in relation to the confounding of languages” “In regard to the confusion of languages it is said of the above nations, that there were "fifteen heads, or chiefs of families, that were permitted to speak the same language." The Book of Mormon, concerning the same event, says: "And it came to pass that the brother of Jared did cry unto the Lord; and the Lord had compassion on Jared, therefore he did not confound the language of Jared"-and it further states that Jared's brother's language was not confounded; and they then prayed for their families and friends also, and the Lord heard them in their behalf; and their language was not confounded. These accounts, then, precisely agree, one of which was found in Ontario county, N. Y., and the other in Mexico.

Again, those nations, of families, embodied themselves together and traveled they know not where, but at length arrived in the country of Aztalan, of the lake country of America. The Book of Mormon says, that the brother of Jared cried unto the Lord, that he would give them another land; the Lord heard him, and told him to go to a certain place, "and there I will meet thee and go before thee into a land which is choice above all the land of the earth." This it further speaks is the land of America. The coincidence is so striking that further comment is unnecessary.-ED.”[[32]](#endnote-33)

1842 July, taught by John Page, Central American setting\*\*\*John Page believed several of the cities in 3 Nephi 8–9 were the same as found in Stephens and Catherwoods book. “And how was you destroyed? was the inquiry of those efficient antiquarians Messrs. Catherwood and Stephens, the charge d'affairs of these United States, as they sit on the wondrous walls of "Copan," situated near the western extremity of the Bay of Honduras, in the narrowest neck of land between the waters of the Atlantic ocean and the Pacific ocean, the very place where the Book of Mormon located a great city, on the narrow neck of land between the two seas. . . . How was this city, with seven or eight others, which Stephens gives us an account of, destroyed? Read the Book of Mormon, and that will tell the story of their sad disasters”[[33]](#endnote-34)

1842 July, taught by Joseph Smith, Hemispheric setting \*\*\*Joseph Smith quotes Josiah Priest on his work in Indians in America and Canada in a comparison with BOM tools/metals/cities, etc… “Weapons of brass have been found in many parts of America, as in the Canadas, Florida, &c. with curiously sculptured stones, all of which go to prove that this country was once peopled with civilized, industrious nations…If men, in their researches into the history of this country, in noticing the mounds, fortifications, statues, architecture, implements of war, of husbandry, and ornaments of silver, brass, &c.-were to examine the Book of Mormon, their conjectures would be removed, and their opinions altered; uncertainty and doubt would be changed into certainty and facts; and they would find that those things that they are anxiously prying into were matters of history, unfolded in that book. They would find their conjectures were more than realized-that a great and a mighty people had inhabited this continent-that the arts sciences and religion, had prevailed to a very great extent, and that there was as great and mighty cities on this continent as on the continent of Asia. Babylon, Ninevah, nor any of the ruins of the Levant could boast of more perfect sculpture, better architectural designs, and more imperishable ruins, than what are found on this continent. Stephens and Catherwood's researches in Central America abundantly testify of this thing. The stupendous ruins, the elegant sculpture, and the magnificence of the ruins of Guatamala, and other cities, corroborate this statement, and show that a great and mighty people-men of great minds, clear intellect, bright genius, and comprehensive designs inhabited this continent. Their ruins speak of their greatness; the Book of Mormen [Mormon} unfolds their history.-ED.”[[34]](#endnote-35)

1842 July, taught by John Page, Central American\*\*\* "Let it be distinctly understood," John Page wrote, "that the Prophet Alma uttered this prophecy, not far from Guatemala or Central America, some 82 years before the birth of Christ."[[35]](#endnote-36)

1842 Sept., unknown, possibly Joseph Smith or John Taylor, Central American setting\*\*\* “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...Let us turn our subject, however, to the Book of Mormon, where *these wonderful ruins of Palenque are among the mighty works of the Nephites*:—and the mystery is solved...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 would have developed such incontrovertible testimony to the Book of Mormon?... 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,"[[36]](#endnote-37)

1842 Oct., unknown, possibly Joseph Smith or John Taylor, Central American setting\*\*\*[W]e have found another important fact relating to the truth of the Book of Mormon. Central America, or Guatimala [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...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 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 in the Book of Mormon: light cleaves to light, and facts are supported by facts.”[[37]](#endnote-38)

1843 Aug., taught by Orson Pratt, Hemispheric setting \*\*\*Wilford Woodruff recorded Orson Pratt words on Book of Mormon geography: “[Orson Pratt] spoke in an edifying manner concerning the Book of Mormon its history what it was &c. That it was a History of nearly one half of the globe & the people that inhabited it, that it gave a history of all those cities that have been of late discovered by Catherwood & Stephens, that it named those cities.”[[38]](#endnote-39)

1843 Oct., taught by Joseph Smith, Central American setting\*\*\* “This is a work [Stephens and Catherwoods book] 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 circumstancial evidence of the authenticity of the latter book, can be given, than that contained in Mr. Stephens' works.”[[39]](#endnote-40)

1844 Jan., Editor of Times and Seasons (John Taylor) Hemispheric setting \*\*\* “ANCIENT RUINS: Every day adds fresh testimony to the already accumulated evidence on the authenticity of the "Book of Mormon." At the time that book was translated there was very little known about ruined cities and dilapidated buildings. The general presumption was, that no people possessing more intelligence than our present race of Indians had ever inhabited this continent, and the accounts given in the Book of Mormon concerning large cities and civilized people having inhabited this land, was generally disbelieved and pronounced a humbug. Priest, since then has thrown some light on this interesting subject. Stephens in his "Incidents of Travels in Central America," has thrown in a flood of testimony, and from the following statements it is evident that the Book of Mormon does not give a more extensive account of large and populous cities than those discoveries now demonstrate to be even in existence.-Ed”[[40]](#endnote-41)

1844 June, taught by Joseph Smith Hemispheric setting \*\*\*\* --“The next day the Prophet came to our home and stopped in our carpenter shop and stood by the turning lathe. I went and got my map for him. "Now", he said, "I will show you the travels of this people"….you will have to go to where the Nephites lost their power...Placing his finger on the map, I should think about where Snowflake, Arizona is situated, or it could have been Mexico…"[[41]](#endnote-42)

You will notice that a North American theory was the most popular in the first decade of the Church. I believe this is because of the works of Josiah Priests[[42]](#endnote-43) and Ethan Smith,[[43]](#endnote-44) as well the access they had to information on local Indian cultures. But as information from Mesoamerica began to come forth from John Lloyd Stephens and Fredrick Catherwoods book “*Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan”*, which began to make its presence known in America in 1841, with their elaborate drawings of ruined cities, detailed explanations of advanced cultures, more and more statements were being made about a Mesoamerican setting for The Book of Mormon. Again, if it was a black and white issue with The Book of Mormon happening either in North or Central America, and Joseph Smith \*knew\* and taught one or the other, the opinions would not have been swayed so easily as we see they were when new information arose. Either they would have stuck with a North American setting, or corrected past statements as conjecture and embraced the new Mesoamerican setting. But we do not see that. What we do see is an acceptance of a Mesoamerican setting becoming popular in 1841, while statements are continually being published advocating a North American setting, as well as a Hemispheric setting for The Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith even used what he saw as evidence of The Book of Mormon for both a North American setting, and a Central American setting in the very same article![[44]](#endnote-45) For those who attempt to say that Joseph Smith only espoused a Great Lakes setting, or a Mesoamerican setting, is not being honest with, or ignoring the facts.

Conclusion,

We do not see any limited geography theory taught consistently in Joseph Smiths time, either by Joseph Smith, Apostles, or the average saint. This would be expected if there were no revealed geography, and Joseph Smith and the Saints were left to speculate on the whereabouts of Book of Mormon events. If there was a true knowledge of Book of Mormon locations in the early days of the Church (assuming a LGT), then Joseph Smith went against any revelation given him by continuing to teach Book of Mormon settings all over the entire Western Continent throughout his whole lifetime. If there were a revealed location, then it was not taught to the 12 Apostles and other Saints, for they continued to teach and publish on BOM lands in North, Central, and South America, without any correction. Even when Joseph Smith was Editor of Church publications, and had the power to deny anything he saw as a false teaching from being published, he allowed several opinions to be taught.

I believe the evidence points in the direction that Joseph Smith did not know the exact area of The Book of Mormon. And just like today, both the Prophet , and the Saints were allowed to speculate on these locations without any correction.

1. . I do not say Great Lakes setting, because his statements place Book of Mormon events in Kentucky, Texas, Florida, and the Western U.S., which would be outside most Great Lakes theorists geography [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. . In the article “Discovery of Ancient Ruins in Central America”, W.W. Phelps places Mesoamerican in “this continent”. “We are glad to see the proof begin to come, of the original or ancient inhabitants of this continent. It is good testimony in favor of the book of Mormon, and the book of Mormon is good testimony that such things as cities and civilization, ‘prior to the fourteenth century,’ existed in America” *Evening and Morning Star* 1/9 (February 1833). He uses “Central America” and “this continent” synonymously. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. . Joseph Smith equated “this country” with Mesoamerica in his letter to John Bernhisel, thanking him for Stephens and Catherwood’s book on their travels through Mesoamerican ruins called *Incidents in Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan.* He wrote “Dear Sir, I received your kind present by the hand of Er Woodruff & feel myself under many obligations for this mark of your esteem & friendship which to me is the more interesting as it unfolds & developes many things that are of great importance to this generation & corresponds with & supports the testimony of the Book of Mormon; I have read the volumes with the greatest interest & pleasure & must say that of all histories that have been written pertaining to the antiquities of this country it is the most correct luminous & comprihensive.-“(emphasis added) Joseph Smith, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, compiled and edited by Dean C. Jessee [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984], 501 - 502. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. . “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 Guatimala [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…” (emphasis added) " Zarahemla," *Times and Seasons* 3/23 (1 October 1842): 927 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
5. . *Observer and Telegraph. Religious, Political, and Literary*, Hudson, Ohio (18 November 1830): 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
6. . Mormonism, *Telegraph* 2 (Feb. 15, 1831), Painsville, Ohio as quoted in H. Michael Marquardt The *Rise of Mormonism: 1816-1814*, (Xulon Press, Longwood, Florida, 2005) pg. 302 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
7. . The Fredonia Censor 11 [7 March 1832]:[4], Fredonia, New York [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
8. . Orson Pratt, "The Orators of Mormonism," Catholic Telegraph, 14 April 1832 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
9. . *Evening and Morning Star*, October 1832, Vol. I, No. 5 “The Far West” By placing the Northern lands of the Nephites, the land of Desolation, in the center of America, it requires that most Book of Mormon events take place south of that area. This would make most North American geography models incompatible with Book of Mormon geography. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
10. . *Evening and Morning Star* 1/9 (February 1833), pg 71. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
11. . Joseph Smith to N. C. Saxton, 4 January 1833, American Revivalist, 2 February 1833 [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
12. . Joseph Smith to Emma Smith, 4 June 1834, in Dean Jessee, Personal Writings of Joseph Smith, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 345—46. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
13. . Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 volumes, edited by Brigham H. Roberts, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 2:79–80; This will be dealt with later in the article. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
14. . *Messenger and Advocate*, Nov. 1835, Vol. 2 No. 14, “Letter #12” [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
15. . W. W. Phelps to Oliver Cowdery, "Letter No. 11," *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2:1 (October 1835): 193–95. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
16. . B.H. Roberts, *History of the Church* (Nov 16, 1835), 1:315 [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
17. . *Messenger and Advocate*, July 1835, pg. 158, re-printed *Times and Seasons* 2 (15 Apr 1841): 378. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
18. . [Sept. 1838] *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star,* "History of Joseph Smith," Vol. 16, page 296, May 13, 1854; In answer to this, John Sorenson writes: “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.” John L. Sorenson, *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book*, FARMS, pg 373) [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
19. . Joseph Smith, *Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith,* compiled by Alma P. Burton, p. 208 [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
20. . Orson Pratt, *An Interesting account of Several Remarkable Visions, and of the Late Discovery of Ancient Records*, 1840. Third American edition, New York, 1842, pg 18, as quoted in John L. Sorensons *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book* FARMS, pg 373) [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
21. . *Millenial Star*, September 1840, Vol. 1 No. 4 “Book of Mormon” [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
22. . *Millenial Star,* September 1840, Vol. 1, No. 4 “Antiquities of America”. Parley P. Pratt makes direct ties between The Book of Mormon and Mesoamerican cities, but in the same article (and previous quote), mentions if you want proof of The Book of Mormon, just look at the relics, ruins, etc… which “now lie scattered over a vast extent of North and South America.” This is a recurring theme among the early saints. They fully believed Book of Mormon cities were in Mesoamerica, but also had a conflicting belief that all the inhabitants of the Americas, North and South, were descended from Book of Mormon peoples. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
23. . Mulder, William. "Mormonism and Literature" in [Cracroft, Richard H.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_H._Cracroft) and Neal E. Lambert, ed. *A Believing People: Literature of the Latter-day Saints*. (Provo: [Brigham Young University Press](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brigham_Young_University_Press), 1974) p. 208 [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
24. . Orson Spencer, *Times and Seasons*, January 2nd 1843, Vol. IV. No. 4.] CITY OF NAUVOO, ILL., pg 51 [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
25. .Charles B. Thompson, *Evidences in The Proof of The Book of Mormon*, BATAVIA,  N. Y.  
    P U B L I S H E D  B Y  D. D.  W A I T E. pg 97-98, re-published in Times and Seasons, 1 Jan. 1842, pgs. 640-644 [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
26. . *Times and Seasons,* June 15, 1841, vol.2 No. 16, pg 440-442 [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
27. . Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 9 vols., ed., Scott G. Kenny (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985), 2:126; journal entry dated 13 Sept 1841 [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
28. . *Times and Seasons,* Sept 15 1841, vol. 2 No. 22 pg. 544-545 [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
29. . Joseph Smith, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, compiled and edited by Dean C. Jessee (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984), 501 - 502. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
30. . Parley P. Pratt, "Ruins in Central America," Millennial Star 2/11 (March 1842): 165. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
31. . Joseph Smith, ed., “A Catacomb of Mummies Found in Kentucky,” *Times and Seasons*, 3:781-782 (May 2, 1842). [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
32. . Traits of the Mosaic History, Found Among the Aztaeca Nations, *Times and Seasons*, vol. III no. 16 Pg 820 [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
33. . John E. Page, reply to "'A Disciple,'" Morning Chronicle, Pittsburgh, 1 July 1842, as quoted in Limited Geography and the Book of Mormon: Historical Antecedents and Early Interpretations, [Matthew Roper](http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/authors/?authorID=73), *FARMS Review*: [Volume - 16](http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/review/?vol=16), [Issue - 2](http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/review/?vol=16&num=2), Pages: 225-76 Provo, Utah: Maxwell Institute, 2004 [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
34. . Joseph Smith (editor)," American Antiquities," *Times and Seasons* 3/18 (15 July 1842): 860 [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
35. . John E. Page, "Mormonism Concluded: To 'A Disciple,'" *Morning Chronicle*, Pittsburgh, 20 July 1842 [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
36. . Extract from Stephens' 'Incidents of Travel in Central America'," *Times and Seasons* 3/22 (15 September 1842): 915, 922; It is unknown who exactly authored this article, but the term “we” is used throughout it, implying there was at least 2 people who helped write it. Some have argued that Joseph Smith, even though acting editor, had nothing to do with the articles in Sept. and Oct. of 1842 because he was in hiding. While this was a time he was hiding from those who wished to do him harm, he did not seclude himself from his family or duties. Joseph Smith was at his house on September 2nd, 11th -14th, 16th-20th, 22nd-24th, 27th-30th, October 3rd-6th and the 20th. That does not include short visits, but only visits that were “all day”. During the time Joseph Smith was in “hiding” he continued on with his duties which he previously had. He held meetings with members of the Twelve Apostles, received revelation now found in the Doctrine and Covenants, wrote and received letters, and met with John Taylor, the assistant editor of Times and Seasons on at least two separate occasions. One of those occasions Joseph Smith specifically “counseled Elder Taylor concerning the printing office.” The Prophet also kept up on local news. We have account of him reading from the newspapers The Wasp, The Quincy Whig, and the New York Herald. It would seem improbable that he read from many periodicals and newspapers, yet neglect to read or edit his own. Dean C. Jessee, *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, (Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1992) pgs. 452-489 [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
37. . See previous footnote " Zarahemla," *Times and Seasons* 3/23 (1 October 1842): 927 [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
38. . Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 9 vols., ed., Scott G. Kenny (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985), 2:282; journal entry dated 27 August 1843. *History of the Church* pg 552 [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
39. . *Times and Seasons* Oct. 1, 1843, Vol. 4 No. 22, pg 346-347 “Stephens’ Works on Central America” [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
40. . *Times and Seasons*, January 1st 1844, 5:390 [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
41. . Mosiah Hancock, Autobiography, BYU Special Collections, Writings of Early Latter-day Saints 28.) *The Journal of Mosiah Lyman Hancock, p. 19-20; Autobiography of Mosiah Hancock, typescript, BYU Library Special Collections, p. 29. Compiled by Amy E. Baird, Victoria H. Jackson, and Laura L. Wassell (daughters of Mosiah Hancock).* [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
42. . *American Antiquities and Discoveries in the West*, (Albany, Hoffman and White, 1835) [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
43. . *View of the Hebrews*, (Smith and Shute, Poultney, Vt, 1823 [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
44. . "Traits of the Mosaic History, Found Among the Azteca Nations," *Times and Seasons* 3/16 (15 June 1842): 818–820 [↑](#endnote-ref-45)