branch of Israel who came out from
the city of Jerusalem five hundred and
eighty-nine years before the coming of
Christ, in the eleventh year of the reign
of Zedekiah, at the time he was taken
captive, and the Jews were carried into
Babylon. One of the sons of Zedekiah,
King of Judah, being commanded of the
Lord, left the city of Jerusalem with
a colony, who were brought forth and
landed north of the Isthmus and jour-
neyed southward, passed through the
narrow neck of land which we term
the Isthmus into the United States
of Columbia, and formed their settle-
ments there, and when discovered by the
Nephites had dwelt there near four hun-
dred years.

The Nephites and the people of Zara-
hemla united together and formed a
great and powerful nation, occupying the
lands south of the Isthmus for many
hundreds of miles, and also from the
Pacific on the west to the Atlantic on
the east, spreading all through the coun-
try. The Lamanites about this time
also occupied South America, the mid-
dle or southern portion of it, and were
exceedingly numerous. I will here ob-
serve, that from the time the Nephites
consolidated themselves with the people
of Zarahemla, they had numerous wars
with the great nation of the Lamanites,
in which many hundreds of thousands
perished on both sides.

About fifty-four years before Christ,
five thousand four hundred men, with
their wives and children, left the north-
ern portion of South America, passed
through the Isthmus, came into this
north country, the north wing of the con-
tinent, and began to settle up North
America, and from that time a great em-
igration of the Nephites and the peo-
dles of Zarahemla took place year by
year. I will here mention one thing
which perhaps may be startling to indivi-
duals who are unacquainted with the an-
tiquities of this country, that the Nephite
nation about this time commenced the
art of shipbuilding. They built many
ships, launching them forth into the
western ocean. The place of the build-
ing of these ships was near the Isthmus
of Darien. Scores of thousands entered
these ships year after year, and passed
along on the western coast northward,
and began to settle the western coast
on the north wing of the continent. I
will observe another thing—when they
came into North America they found all
this country covered with the ruins of
cities, villages and towns, the inhabi-
tants having been cut off and destroyed.
The timber had also been cut off, in-
somuch that in many places there was
no timber by which they could construct
their dwellings, hence the Nephites and
the people of Zarahemla had to build
their houses of cement, others had to
dwell in tents. Vast quantities of tim-
ber were shipped from the south to the
people on the western coast, enabling
them to build many towns, cities and
villages. The latter also planted groves
of timber, and in process of time they
raised great quantities, which furnished
them with sufficient for building and
other purposes. Forty-five years before
the coming of Christ there was a vast
colony came out of South America, and
it is said in the Book of Mormon that
they went an exceeding great distance,
until they came to large bodies of wa-
ter and to many rivers and fountains,
and when we come to read more fully
the description of the country it answers
to the great Mississippi Valley. There
they formed a colony. We know that
to be the region of country from the
fact that these plates were taken from a
hill in the interior of the State of New
York, being the descendants of those