according to the Book of Mormon they
must have been very numerous indeed.
The history of the ancient inhabitants
of this land was kept by their kings,
and the records became very volumi-
nous; and they were all deposited by
the Prophet Mormon in that hill; but
the abridgment from which the Book of
Mormon was taken was given into the
hands of his son Moroni, to finish out
the record. The last date given on these
records was 420 years after Christ.

You may inquire how the people on
this land knew about the birth of Christ.
I will say that they understood Chris-
tianity on this western hemisphere as
well as on the eastern hemisphere. They
were not left in darkness here concern-
ing the Savior of the world and his atone-
ment. They knew all about it. How? Je-
sus, who is the God of the whole earth,
appeared to them after his crucifixion,
and resurrection from the dead. He
showed them the wounds in his hands,
feet and side, and delivered to them
his Gospel in its plainness and fullness,
and they were commanded to write it
on plates. They knew also, of his birth,
in the land of their forefathers, by the
signs which God gave to them on this
land. They were told that at the time
of the birth of Jesus there should be two
days and one night without any dark-
ness at all; they should see the sun go
down at night and rise in the morn-
ing, and that during the whole of that
time it should be light as day. They
commenced the reckoning of their time
from that period. Previous to that time
they had reckoned their time from the
date of their leaving Jerusalem, pre-
cisely six hundred years before the birth
of Christ. Four hundred and twenty
years after that great event the Prophet
Moroni informs us that he also was
commanded to hide up this abridgment
in the same hill, but in another part
of it, in which his father Mormon hid
up the sacred records. And the Lord
made a promise to Moroni, also to Mor-
on, and to many other Prophets who
dwelt on this land in previous genera-
tions, that these plates should never be
destroyed, but that they should be pre-
served by his hand, and that they should
be brought forth out of the earth in the
latter days, for the purpose of bringing
about the gathering of his people from
the ends of the earth, and the bringing
in of the fullness of the Gentiles and ful-
filling their times, after which the trans-
lation of these records should go to all
the remnants of the house of Israel, scat-
tered abroad on the face of the whole
earth; and that these records should be
instrumental in the hands of God in
gathering Israel from the four quarters
of the earth.

These were the promises of God to
the ancient Prophets of this continent,
and the angel told Joseph Smith con-
cerning these plates, and where they
were deposited. At the same time, the
vision of the Almighty was open to the
mind of Joseph, and he saw the very
spot. After the angel had conversed with
him sometime on this subject, and had
opened up to him the prophecies of the
holy Prophets concerning the great work
that was to be accomplished in the lat-
ter days, he withdrew, and Joseph con-
tinued praying. Some, perhaps, might
think that this was a dream; but it was
not, he was wide awake. As he continued
praying, the angel came again the second
time, and gave him still further infor-
mation concerning the rise of the latter-
day kingdom of God upon the earth, and
the great work the Almighty intended
to accomplish preparatory to the com-
ing of his Son from the heavens with all