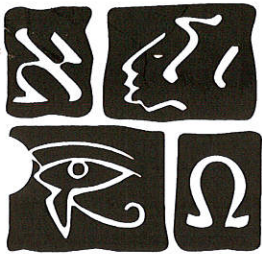




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Transcript

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Royal Skousen

The Critical Text of the Book of Mormon

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Summary:

A critical edition of the Book of Mormon has two main objectives. The first is to determine the original text of the Book of Mormon to the extent that it can be determined. The second is to determine the history of the text, as it has changed over the many editions of that book that have been published. Royal Skousen describes the history of the early manuscripts and editions of the Book of Mormon in order to better understand this book of scripture.

Transcript
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The Critical Text of the Book of Mormon

Royal Skousen

Today we are going to be talking about the critical text of the Book of Mormon. A lot of people, when they hear this term, wonder exactly what a critical text of the Book of Mormon might be. Some people misinterpret it to think that it means something that is critical of the Book of Mormon and, in fact, when F.A.R.M.S published the first critical edition of the Book of Mormon, one of the news services reported that at BYU a book critical of the Book of Mormon had just been published!

Briefly, a critical edition of the Book of Mormon has two main objectives. The first is to determine the original text of the Book of Mormon to the extent that it can be determined. There are difficulties in finding what the original text was. Now, I might explain here what we mean by the original text. We are not attempting to figure out what the original language was. We would have to have the actual plates to do that. What we are referring to is the English language text that Joseph Smith received by means of the sacred interpreters that he was using. And there is evidence, as we will talk about, that Joseph Smith was apparently able to actually see words of English by the methods that he was using. So, that is one of our major purposes, to try to determine what Joseph Smith actually saw and then attempted to dictate to the scribes that were writing down what he was saying.

The second objective of a critical edition is to determine the history of the text of the Book of Mormon, as it has changed over the many editions that have been published of that book. Now, as we look at the history of the text of the Book of Mormon, we discover that there are changes which have taken place over time. Some of these are accidental. A scribe, in attempting to make a copy of the original manuscript, may make errors in that transcription. A printer, in setting the type for an edition, may make errors. These are accidental errors. There are other kinds of changes which are done on purpose. This would be chiefly editing—where you have individuals that look at a particular expression and say, “Well, this isn’t standard English”—and perhaps their goal is to have the text in a more appropriate form of English, and so changes will be made in that way.

So, the critical edition, as it turns out, will be a version of the Book of Mormon that is unlike the typical kind of version that you have. When you look at your current edition of the Book of Mormon there are notes down at the bottom; but none of them tell you that the 1830 edition, instead of reading this word, read some other word. There is not one place in this edition where it tells you what other readings might have been at earlier periods of time, but that is, in essence, what a critical edition does.

It typically has the text of a given page, such as here, and it has notes at the bottom, but the notes tell you how the text has changed over time. The term *critical* comes from a Greek word meaning to decide or to judge. And a critical edition is one that provides readings at the bottom of the page that allow the reader to decide what he or she might think would be the correct reading. In other words, you are given a choice. Very seldom do you ever pick up a book that is done this way. Virtually every book you read is a non-critical text. It just gives you one version and doesn't have variant readings.

Well, someone might ask, why do we need a critical edition? I would say that the average member of the Church doesn't need a critical edition. Essentially, a critical edition is being produced for scholars who have need for information about the history of the text and what the original language might have been. For example, researchers may be interested in studying the actual language used as the book was revealed through Joseph Smith. You will find, for example, that in the original language there are a number of expressions which are not really appropriate for English. Some of these are non-standard English; they represent Joseph Smith's own speech at the time, a colloquial dialect of upstate New York English. And so there are things like: "The army of the Lamanites was a marchin'." And, this is not, of course, standard English; but the Book of Mormon was given in the English which was appropriate for Joseph Smith.

One of the interesting things we have discovered is that, in the original language, there are expressions which were not characteristic of Joseph Smith's upstate New York English, nor were they characteristic of a King James style of English, as we have in the standard English Bible. One of the things which we have found are Hebrew-like expressions, almost as if the book had been literally translated from Hebrew; and the result is something which is very bad English. This occurs rather consistently in the text. One example of this is the way you express an *if/then* statement in Hebrew. In English we say something like: "If you come, *then* I will come." The *then* is optional; you can say, "If you come, I will come." In Hebrew the literal word-for-word translation of the way you express this is something like: "If you come *and* I will come." Now, that isn't really understandable English. In the original text of the Book of Mormon there are over a dozen of these *if/and* expressions, all meaning *if/then*. In fact, probably the most famous verse in the Book of Mormon, at least for missionaries, is Moroni 10:4, which in the original language reads: "And if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, *and* he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost." This particular use of *and* was removed in the second edition because it really isn't English. It is an interesting example of the original language containing expressions that are apparently characteristic of the Hebrew language.

A second aspect of this project, besides studying the actual original language, is of course to find errors that have occurred in the transmission. Most of the errors that have occurred in printing have been discovered. But the main finding, I think,

of this project—one of the main findings—is to discover a good many errors that occurred when Oliver Cowdery was copying the original manuscript and producing the copy that is called the “printer’s manuscript.” The *original manuscript* is the one the scribes wrote down as Joseph Smith dictated. The *printer’s manuscript* was this copy that was made, and it was the copy taken to the printer.

Joseph Smith, as you recall, lost 116 pages of manuscript, and (like all of us computer users) discovered that you have to “back up”! Joseph Smith learned his lesson the hard way (as most of us do with computers), and he then, of course, “backed up” the original manuscript by having this copy made. Well, unfortunately the copy introduced errors. Oliver Cowdery, on the average, made about three changes per manuscript page. Now, these changes are not anything of any dramatic order. They are not ones that change the message of the book; but it is true, as we discover these, we find that the original reading made better sense, and so we try to find and restore as many of these as possible.

Let me give you one example from Alma 51:7. I might point out they are talking about a recall election for Parhoron, who was the chief judge. Parhoron won the election and the original manuscript says this “caused much rejoicing among the brethren of Parhoron and also among the people of liberty.” Now, this is what Oliver Cowdery originally wrote. In other words, it made the brethren (the relatives) of Parhoron happy, and it made his political party happy—all the people that voted for him. But when Oliver was copying this into the printer’s manuscript, he switched pages right at this moment, and as he was copying he looked very quickly at the word *among* and instead of writing *among* he wrote *many*. And so, the way he wrote it in the printer’s manuscript was: “which caused much rejoicing among the brethren of Parhoron and also many the people of liberty.” The printer, when he got ahold of the printer’s manuscript and tried to read this, saw that it wasn’t good English. It just had, “many the people of liberty”; and so he wrote in pencil right above *many* the word *of*, so that when he set the type he put in: “which caused much rejoicing among the brethren of Parhoron and also many of the people of liberty.” The passage as it now reads in the text makes it sound like it is a normal kind of election which we are used to. We vote for people, but we are not that enthused that they win. And so only part of the people that voted for the candidate are happy about it. It still sort of works, but the original intent was not to say that only part of the people of liberty were happy about Parhoron’s victory; all of the people of liberty were happy. So these are the kinds of errors that we are looking for and attempting to eliminate.

Finally, a critical edition ultimately helps us understand, much more clearly, the transmission of the text itself. Questions like:

How did Joseph Smith translate?

What kinds of problems did the scribes have in listening to Joseph Smith?

How did Joseph Smith pronounce some of the words?

What were the printing errors that the printer introduced?

What kinds of problems did the printer have in reading a given hand of a scribe?

And, finally, we want to make a study of the grammatical changes that have been made. Who made them, what were the assumptions of making these changes, and so forth? I have been involved in this project now for about five years and we are at the halfway point of it.

As I mentioned earlier, F.A.R.M.S. produced the first critical edition of the Book of Mormon. This occurred in 1984–86 and that edition is still, I understand, available from F.A.R.M.S. There is text, which attempts to give the original text of the Book of Mormon, and then there are notes at the bottom, many of them describing what the changes have been. This particular critical text, I would say, is quite preliminary. It was based on looking only at microfilm copies of the manuscripts of the Book of Mormon, and you really, ultimately, have to look at special ultraviolet photographs or the actual manuscripts to be able to read certain things.

In 1988, at a linguistics conference at BYU, I made a proposal that we make independent transcripts of all the manuscripts, that we take the major editions of the Book of Mormon and put them on computer, and that, then, we make computerized comparisons of the various versions so that we could get a definitive view of what the changes have been.

So this is where we are—we are in the process of finishing up the first half of the project, which is basically to get everything in an electronic version. We have two manuscripts that have to be produced in what are called facsimile transcripts. These are transcripts that try to put on a sheet of paper exactly where letters are, and so forth. We have seventeen editions of the Book of Mormon that we have put on computer, beginning with the 1830 edition and going up to our 1981 edition. The first half of the project has taken us five years just to get these things on computer. We did scanning of the printed editions; and you think scanning works just wonderfully and beautifully one hundred percent of the time. Unfortunately, it is much more difficult than that. Some of those early editions were printed with poor type, and the letters are not clear to a machine trying to read them. To us they are usually pretty clear. But, if you have a *b* for example, and just a little part down at the bottom is missing, it will look like an *h* to the scanner. When we read it, it just looks like a *b* because we are reading holistically, but the scanner is just reading one letter at a time.

In the second half of this project we are going to be doing a number of things. We are going to be doing what is called a computer collation—a big comparison project of all the textual sources of the Book of Mormon. We will then create a large database where you can just look up any word, and see how it has been used in all the different editions, or any place in the book. This is very necessary, actually, for studying the text and trying to figure out what it was originally like. Ultimately, we

will create a critical text by selecting the appropriate readings, the ones that represent the original. We are going to try to do this without editing, that is without actually typing it again ourselves, because if we do this we have created another text. We could create another monster full of typos and other problems. So, we don't want to create the twentieth text here, although we are, but we are trying to prevent creating something that we have to spend five years checking!

One important aspect of this project is to study what are called conjectural emendations. These are changes that we propose based on considerations of logic, internal consistency, and the kinds of errors that scribes make. There are numerous places where we think there might be an error in the text, but all of the manuscript forms don't directly give us evidence as to what the correct reading should be. Let me give you an example.

In Helaman 3:3, if you look at your current text it reads: "And it came to pass in the forty and sixth yea there was much contentions." Now it is punctuated so that it reads something like this, "And it came to pass that in the forty and sixth, yea, there was much contentions." Now people have looked at this and said, is it possible that *yea* is really not *yea* but *year*, and the *r* is missing? Well, if we look at the original manuscript, and the printer's manuscript, and the 1830 edition, all the editions, everything says *yea*. But there is good reason to believe that actually this is *year*. But to establish that we have to look at evidence for it. We can't just say, "Well, I think this sounds good, I am going to make this change." If we did that, we could make thousands of changes. You know, in fact, people have sent me things in the mail to say, "Well I think this is wrong, and this is wrong," and I have a file of all of these.

But in this particular example, we can provide evidence. For example, we would go through the Book of Mormon and look at how *yea* is actually used. And it turns out that when we look at *yea*, we find out that it is used to provide emphasis on something which has just been said. It emphasizes some particular aspect. Here the *yea* doesn't emphasize anything; it is just out there alone. Here the word *yea* is not being used in an internally appropriate way. But the other thing we look at is, is there any evidence that the scribe might have had difficulty writing the word *year*? Did the scribe throw off *r*'s when trying to write *year*? Actually, there are about twenty examples of this—where Oliver Cowdery, in trying to write *year* ended up writing up *yea*. Most of the time he caught himself, and he put a little *r* in—just inserted it. But there is one very nice example where the original manuscript read *year* and when he copied it into the printer's manuscript he wrote *yea*. And this is clear evidence that Oliver Cowdery had a problem. And so, given those kinds of evidences, we believe that, yes, this should probably read *year*.

Now note, by the way, this is a pretty trivial kind of thing. It isn't really going to change our understanding of the book, and I think this is an important thing to keep in mind when we talk about the changes because some people have a very misconceived notion. They have an idea first of all that the Lord would have,

somehow, prevented any change from ever occurring. But no, the Lord has had people work on the text. They have tried to do their best but human error does occur.

Well, let me mention a little bit about what we know of these two manuscripts, because getting access to the manuscripts has probably been the most exciting part of the project. There are two manuscripts; one is called the original, as I mentioned. This is the *dictated* manuscript. It was produced during the spring and early summer of 1829. Then, after that part was completed, the printer's manuscript was produced—this is the *copy* that was made. The printer's manuscript was not produced all at once. They didn't just sit down and say, "Now we are going to make this copy." Rather, they produced the printer's manuscript as the printer needed material. This usually forced them every week and a half to produce twenty-four pages of manuscript. The printer's manuscript was produced beginning in August of 1829, and probably in the early months of 1830 it was completed as the printing took place.

Of the original manuscript we only have about 25–30%. In 1841 Joseph Smith placed the manuscript in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House, the hotel that was being built in Nauvoo. About forty years later, Lewis Bidamon, Emma's second husband, removed the manuscript from the cornerstone. The seal on the cornerstone had been broken over the years, and water had seeped in, and moisture and mold had attacked the books, the manuscript, and other things that were there. The manuscript had probably just been placed in there, and the very top sheets were preserved, and the middle section was preserved, but the portions at the bottom, where there could have been more water, had been apparently almost totally destroyed.

Lewis Bidamon handed out the better preserved sheets over the next six years. Most of them went to LDS people, and these sheets have ultimately ended up in the Church's Historical Department in Salt Lake City. These sheets are extremely difficult to read because of the water damage. When you look at a typical sheet in normal light you can just barely see some faint brown ink. Black ink turns brown over time, but even these are extremely difficult to read, and on some of them you can hardly see anything. In the early 1950s, or perhaps late 1940s, these sheets were photographed in ultraviolet light, and this brought out the ink, for the most part. And so, we rely more upon these photographs to figure out what the original manuscript reads than on the actual manuscript.

The printer's manuscript, on the other hand, is virtually intact. We are only missing about three lines or so from the first page [that is, leaf] that were worn off. The printer's manuscript was taken by Oliver Cowdery when he left the Church in 1838. Oliver died in 1851 [actually 1850]—he was at David Whitmer's home; in fact Whitmer was his brother-in-law—and so, as he was dying he gave the manuscript to David Whitmer to keep safe. When David Whitmer died, in the late 1880s, his grandson received it. And his grandson, after some time, attempted to sell the

manuscript and it was bought by the RLDS church in the first decade of the 1900s. So this manuscript exists. It is difficult to work with because it is the printer's manuscript, and this means the manuscript went to the printer and the printer started marking up things. They even cut part of the sheets and so forth. Fortunately, they pinned them back together and so we have 99.99 percent of that manuscript.

Some of the things that we discovered about the Book of Mormon from these manuscripts include: we can show that the original manuscript is a dictated manuscript—that is, the person writing it is listening to someone else, because the errors that are made are the kinds that you would make by mishearing. For example, *them* and *him* are switched, because Joseph Smith was apparently saying something like, "He sayeth unto 'um," and the scribe didn't know, was it *him* or *them*? And so the scribe sometimes wrote one or the other and crossed it out and so forth. In fact, there are a couple of places where I believe that we still have the wrong one! Or another example where it speaks about a *reed*. It is a quote from Isaiah [actually not a quote] and it ends up being *weed* in the original manuscript. And *reed* and *weed* are really quite close, and *weed* is the more familiar word. And so these kinds of things occur.

We have direct evidence that Joseph Smith could apparently see the spellings of names. Witnesses to the translation said that Joseph Smith, when asked, would spell out names—unfamiliar names—to the scribes so the spelling would be correct. And we can find evidence in the manuscript of this process taking place. My favorite example is from Helaman 1:15 where Oliver Cowdery first writes [the name] *Coriantumr*. He hears it; Joseph Smith pronounces it; he writes it, and he writes at the end *-tummer: Coriantummer!* And then the word is crossed out—the whole name—and after it, on the same line, which shows it was immediately done, it wasn't something they came back to later, it is written as we have it in the book today—ending in *tumr*. When Oliver wrote that *mr*—he put *m* then he put *r* and put a big swirl on that *r*, which he does nowhere else in any of the manuscripts. It was like, "How could you expect me to spell this!?" And you couldn't, even if Joseph Smith had said "*cor-ee-an-tuh-mur*"! No matter how slow you did it, you would not spell it correctly. English speaking people would have always written *m-[some vowel]-r*. So to get *mr*, Joseph Smith had to have spelled it, letter by letter. This suggests, too, that the control which Joseph Smith had over the translation was much better than people think—who believe that Joseph Smith just had ideas in his mind. He had to, at least for names, gotten in his mind the actual spelling in order to be able to do this.

There is some evidence that Joseph Smith was dealing with about 20–30 words at a time; and we can tell this by a tendency for the scribe to sometimes jump ahead trying to keep up with Joseph Smith, and perhaps skip a portion. And then we can calculate how much he skipped and what he was trying to do. Apparently Joseph Smith would sometimes read off too much at a time. What I have discovered is that anytime you go over about ten words people have a very difficult

time giving back any more than ten words at a time. Some errors would suggest twenty-five words; Joseph Smith read off twenty-five words at a time. He got carried away, and of course, the scribe couldn't keep up with it, and made certain kinds of errors.

One of the most surprising findings in this project is that the original manuscript was used as the printer's manuscript (the printer's copy) for about seventy-two pages. About three-fourths of the way through the printing, all of a sudden, the printer's manuscript wasn't being used! Instead, the original was being used. We have fragments from the original manuscript in this place, and those fragments have the pencil marks that the printer put all over the manuscript when he got the copy in his hand. And I have tried to think why would they be bringing in the original. The three brethren that were responsible for producing the printer's copy were also the ones in charge of the whole project: they were Martin Harris, and Oliver Cowdery, and Hyrum Smith. Joseph Smith wasn't even there—he was down in Harmony, Pennsylvania. And they would go in every day with the portion of the manuscript; the printer would work on it, and they would take it home at night. Then, apparently at night, they would spend their time copying so that they would have material ready for the printer when he needed more. My theory is that they came to a place where they fell behind, and hadn't reproduced enough of the manuscript. As they had already gone three-fourths of the way through, they decided to take in the original. They didn't have a back up! They did, though, try to catch up, and eventually they had both Oliver and, I believe, Martin Harris, working together on different portions so they could catch up on the copying process.

This is actually very important for the critical text project, because when you have two first-hand copies of something, even if you do not have the original, or very much of it, you can usually figure out what the original said. If the two copies agree, then you can be fairly sure that that is what the original said. Where they differ, one of them is probably right. Now, that is the hard part, only one of them is right, and you don't know which one it is. There are other things, but at least you have a choice. See, for the rest of the Book of Mormon, you only have one copy of the original manuscript. The printer's is the copy and then they take the printer's to the press and the 1830 edition is a copy of the printer's, with changes. But for those seventy-two pages they type-set from the original, and so we are excited about the possibility of being able to fairly well recover the text for those seventy-two pages, even though we don't have much of the original there.

People have asked, "Will these discoveries eventually appear in our printed scriptures?" and the answer is yes. The Church scripture committee is well aware of the results of this project, and we have been making plans so that they can receive these results, and make them a part of the text as we get the information.

Well, for the remainder of the time I would like to show you some of the slides that we have of the manuscripts, and what they might represent, and some of the discoveries which we have had in this project.

This first slide is an example of a critical text. This is not English, but this is the Vulgate, the Latin Bible, the Latin-language Bible that Jerome translated. And this portion up here is called the text itself. The editors of this text have, basically, tried to put here what they believe Jerome actually decided upon when he made his translation. Now you see, we don't actually have Jerome's original manuscript; all we have are copies that were made over the following centuries.

Down here we have notes that show different forms. For instance, in verse 22 it refers to a particular word, and it says a manuscript *s* has this form and manuscripts *i*, *a*, and *k* have this form, and so forth. And so, this is what we mean by critical text. This is called the apparatus and these are the variants. But up here there is a particular form chosen by the editors.

This is the first critical edition that F.A.R.M.S. produced in 1984–86. Here we see the text, beginning with the title page of the book, and here are some notes. Some of the notes do not deal, actually, with the text and some do. For example, this says *prophecy* spelled with a *c*, and spelled with an *s* here. And so sometimes they give just spelling variants as some of the variants.

Now, one of the really important discoveries of this project was to conserve some fragments of the original manuscript. Lewis Bidamon gave out, we thought, all that he had of the original manuscripts; but we discovered that he had kept back some small fragments for himself. When he died, his son Charles Bidamon owned these; and in 1937 a collector by the name of Wilford Wood (from Bountiful, Utah) was back in Illinois, and he met with Charles Bidamon, and discovered that he had some fragments of the original manuscript, and so he purchased them. Wilford Wood just kept them in a plastic box for the next forty or fifty years. He died, but his two daughters kept these two materials and didn't touch them, which was very fortunate. In about October of 1991 (the time passes quickly), Richard Glade, the grandson of Wilford Wood, brought these fragments down to the BYU library to have them conserved and photographed.

This is Robert Espinosa, who is the head of conservation in the library, and he will be the one that will be opening up this bunch of fragments. Now, we didn't know whether these fragments were really from the original manuscript. All we could go on at the time was that the family believed they were.

Richard Glade brought them down in this box—in a metal box—and there is the plastic box that contains them.

Here we have Robert opening up the plastic box. Now there is a 1837 Book of Mormon in this box; this 1837 Book of Mormon was also in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House, and is very badly damaged, but underneath, in a cellophane container, are these purported fragments from the original manuscript.

Here Robert is taking some staples out. This cellophane was stapled at both ends, and so it will be removed.

And here then is what I call the 'lump'. This is typical color for the fragments of the original manuscript—this brown color. I might indicate Mark Hoffman had a heyday producing missing portions of the original manuscript, but his fragments did not have the appropriate color. In any event, you really can't see much on these fragments, as far as writing—a little bit of ink here and there—but it is not going to be easy to read by visually observing the pieces.

Here Robert begins the rather tedious process of pulling these fragments apart. It is very fortunate, I think, that these things were actually preserved in this lump in dry Utah for the last fifty years, and made it really rather easy to take apart the fragments without tearing them, and without having them fall apart too much. So, the first process is to get them apart in main portions.

This particular piece of machinery here is a humidifier, and it turned out to be very important for our work because many of these fragments, if you had them in normal air and pulled them, as you unfolded them, they would just break. So, what you want to do is to get moisture in them, so that you can possibly get them unfolded without breaking them; and you could put them in here, and you build up steam inside, then take them out. You can work with them for about twenty minutes before they then dry out completely—the water evaporates and you have to put them back in.

Here, one of the conservators, Kathy Bell, is taking out a fragment after it has been humidifying. You can see the fog that has been built up there.

This is Pam Barrios, also a conservator. She has a fragment here that she is unfolding. She is using an instrument that we call a spatula—not the normal one for flipping eggs, but it works!

And here is a close-up of that. Actually, there is more than one piece. There were several layers of sheets that were together, and then were folded on top of each other.

One thing which we have to do is patching. Very often we will be working with these fragments and they will suddenly break apart, but we know they went together and there is a little semi-transparent patch that we can put on, and Kathy Bell here is doing some patch work on a fragment to keep it together.

Now after we had basically flattened these pieces (and they had been unfolded and flattened), we put them in these envelopes and then they were ready for the photographer to photograph. David Hawkinson, of BYU's Fine Arts Museum, is the photographer. He normally does photographic work on paintings and uses infrared and ultraviolet photography. One of the things which he had to discover was which

process would be the best to photograph these fragments to bring out the ink. We discovered that the infrared did not work. The reason for this is apparently that there is no iron in the ink; it was apparently just made out of vegetable material, which doesn't show up with the infrared but does with ultraviolet. Fortunately, we got something. David wasn't confident that he was going to get much, but we did get something.

The next series just shows you how a fragment can be all sort of squished up and as we unravel the thing we can get quite a large fragment out of it. I will just go through a series here.

Here it is in the humidifier. As soon as it gets in there it starts to relax—as the water is absorbed by the piece.

Here it is being teased apart, and it really was sort of amazing to us as this thing got larger and larger.

Here is the final piece. It is opened up as you can see. It looks blank—it is blank! It turns out that this particular piece of paper was not part of the original manuscript. It is a part of the cover for a petition. Lyman Wight, one of the twelve apostles, had written a petition to the US Government about the sufferings he and his family had undergone while in Missouri. In the cornerstone they put one of the petitions and the one they chose was Lyman Wight's. We found fragments of Lyman Wight's petition in this group of fragments that Wilford Wood had.

Now here is the photographer David Hawkinson, and he is preparing a fragment for photography. This actually is the Lyman Wight fragment. It is not a part of the original manuscript, but there is original manuscript stuff here.

Here is a color photograph in normal light of the Lyman Wight fragment; in fact, his name is right here—Lyman Wight. And down here is the statement of the county judge certifying that he had appeared before him to give this affidavit.

Here is the ultraviolet black and white photograph of the proceeding. You can see that the text coming out really very nicely—at least for me it is very nice! Some people don't think this is very good, but it is all relative.

We even did some microscopic photographs of the paper to analyze it, and this is the paper of the petition. I think I have another one in here; you can see the different types of paper. I might point out in this regard that Robert Espinosa went through all the little fragments that we had and tried to identify the paper type, because we found about five paper types in this collection. And, if you know the paper type then you have a pretty good idea that a fragment comes from a certain part of the manuscript, from bigger fragments which you can identify. We don't have to hunt through the whole Book of Mormon, we only have to hunt through fifty pages to find its place.

This is a photograph of some machinery used for encapsulating the fragments in mylar. We need to encapsulate them so that they can then be picked up and looked at without damaging them. This preserves them for time. If later we need to photograph or analyze we can remove this encapsulation. It is not lamination! When you laminate something with plastic, that plastic adheres to the actual thing that you have inside it. We don't laminate, we just encapsulate, which means you have a layer of mylar on top and underneath, and then we stick the mylar together around it and just hold it firm. This is how we conserve these pieces.

Here is Robert Espinosa doing some final work on some fragments that have been encapsulated.

This is a schematic drawing of the two manuscripts. This line represents the printer's manuscript, and as you can see, it goes from 1 Nephi to Moroni and the line is solid, which means we have, basically, the whole thing. There are some lines along here—these are where the punctuation marks were made by the typesetter. This line here represents the original manuscript and what we have. And the Church basically has these long lines here. The Wilford Wood fragments gave us fragments from fifty-eight pages of the manuscript in six different areas; and they are encircled here—there are four circles up here. This is basically 2 Nephi down through the book of Enos. We have some here from the end of Helaman and the beginning of 3 Nephi; and then we have some from Ether. You see it is rather spotty; we don't have the full manuscript at all.

Now I am going to show you a few fragments.

This is a fragment that was all rolled up and sort of looks like . . . well, I won't say! But it was unrolled, it has not been flattened yet. You can see this big water mark in the middle of it.

Here it is after it has been flattened.

This is from 2 Nephi 7 & 8. This shows you what the ultraviolet photography does.

The other one I don't think you can read much.

But this one you can definitely read. It turns out that when Oliver Cowdery was copying this portion into the printer's manuscript he made six changes! And what we find about Oliver is that when he is copying he goes along sometimes page after page making no changes at all, and then all of a sudden bam, bam, bam, he just starts making them. And this is an indication that he is getting tired. So in this one little fragment, as he was copying he made six changes. And this is typical of copy work. When you are tired you don't even know you are making mistakes.

This is the paper from this portion. It is a very coarse paper. It is a machine-made paper. By studying various aspects of the paper we are able to determine that. Most of the paper is hand-made paper in the Book of Mormon manuscript; but there is one section with machine-made.

This is a fragment from 2 Nephi 25. This one is probably the best preserved—you can see some of the writing there. That one can actually be read without special photography, but you would much rather read it in the ultraviolet.

This is a reconstruction. As we have gone through the other pieces and used the computerized scriptures, and also a special computerized database, we are able to figure out all these other fragments. This was probably the piece that originally came out of the cornerstone and that has, of course, all been broken apart in various years.

We make of these fragments what is called a facsimile transcript. This is a facsimile transcript of what you just saw before. And this is the text of what it actually reads. If there is a word inserted, we put it right above where it actually is.

Here in capital letters we have what we believe was written in the places where there are holes—where things don't appear today. So this is what we call a facsimile transcript.

This is a fragment from the end of the book of Jacob and you can hardly read anything on this piece.

And here we have it in the ultraviolet, and its very famous words at the end, "Brethren, adieu"—the word that anti-Mormons love because, being ignorant of the English, they think *adieu* is only a French word!

Here is a fragment from the end of Helaman. This is unlike anything else you have seen. Notice these marks. These are pencil marks, and those are the pencil marks for punctuation that the printer was putting in. The original manuscript had no punctuation—the printer's manuscript had very little—and so the typesetter put these punctuation marks in and this is one of the proofs that the original manuscript is being used as the printer's copy.

And here is the ultraviolet of that same piece. You can't see the printer's marks very well in this one.

Finally, this is a fragment from Ether and it looks like a piece of dynamite almost, to me, with a fuse. Robert Espinosa took this one apart himself. This is a reconstruction of what is in that. You can see we have actually reconstructed it in a book-like version. The page I am going to show you next is this center page, and we can figure out how it was put together. Notice that string coming out. Well, I have sort of reconstructed what it was like. You're welcome to look at that if you wish.

And there's that center piece.

And there is the ultraviolet. This piece is very hard to read even in the ultraviolet.

I just want to close by referring to my own testimony of the Book of Mormon. My testimony of the Book of Mormon is not based on the work that I have been doing in this project. I think it has been very interesting to have discovered things which support what witnesses said about the translation, that testify that indeed this really is a revelation from the Lord.

My own personal witness of the Book of Mormon comes from an experience I had while reading the book fifteen years ago—when the spirit witnessed to me that the events I was reading about actually happened. And, I am grateful for that spiritual witness of the book. I think that is the crucial testimony that we all desire.

It has been a great personal satisfaction to me to see all of my academic work being put to good use, and to find direct evidence for things like the spelling out of names, and what Joseph Smith really had to do to be able to translate this book. It is my witness that this book truly is a revelation from our Heavenly Father, and it is for us. My prayer is that we may read it in that light. We learn things from these details that give us understanding, but ultimately it is that spiritual witness which is the one which really gives us the solid foundation of belief in the book. Thank you.