

Abstract: *Royal Skousen's Book of Mormon Critical Text Project has proposed many hundreds of changes to the text of the Book of Mormon. A subset of these changes does not come from definitive evidence found in the manuscripts or printed editions but are conjectural emendations. In this paper, I examine one of these proposed changes — the merging of two dissenting Nephite groups, the Amlicites and the Amalekites. Carefully examining the timeline and geography of these groups shows logical problems with their being the same people. This paper argues that they are, indeed, separate groups and explores a plausible explanation for the missing origins of the Amalekites.*

In the landmark Book of Mormon Critical Text Project, Royal Skousen endeavored to restore the original reading of the Book of Mormon. By examining the manuscripts and earliest printed editions of the Book of Mormon, he discovered and corrected hundreds of errors. There are instances where an appeal to the original texts did not yield a conclusive result, however. In such cases, Skousen chose to create a new reading based on his conjectural emendation.¹ There are many such conjectural emendations in his Earliest Text,² but perhaps the one that has had the greatest potential impact on how we understand the story of the Book of Mormon is the decision to change every instance of *Amalekite(s)* to *Amlicite(s)*.

In the four-page explanation³ that Skousen gave on the subject, he offers spelling and narrative reasons for and against merging the two groups. The original manuscript is not extant for Alma 2 and 3, so all that could be examined was the printer's manuscript for *Amlici(tes)*. It showed that in 41 of 43 occurrences, the name was spelled correctly. In two occurrences, a *k* was used instead of a *c*. Skousen suggests "that [Page 270]Joseph Smith pronounced *Amlicites* (as well as its base morpheme, the name *Amlici*) with a /k/ sound rather than with the /s/ sound." The original manuscript is also missing for the first eight occurrences of *Amalekite(s)*. Occurrences nine through eighteen show variations in the consonants *c* and *k* and the vowels *a*, *e*, and *i*. These spelling variations were corrected when the manuscript was copied. "The printer's manuscript (and every published edition) uses the term *Amalekite(s)* to refer to a group of religious apostates, fourteen times in Alma 21–27 and five times in Alma 43."

Emma Smith, Joseph's wife and one of his scribes, explained that he would spell out the first instance of a proper noun letter by letter.⁴ When the same word came up again, Joseph would not respell it; it would be up to the scribe to continue to spell it correctly. Oliver Cowdery did not spell *Amalekites* consistently, but this is not unusual. In fact, there are many spelling variations of proper nouns in late instances in the original manuscript that were later corrected in the printer's manuscript. The spelling of a similar name, *Amalickiah*, shows similar misspellings in the original manuscript.⁵ This is consistent with the way that we understand that Oliver did his scribal work.⁶ We should trust the consistent spelling in the printer's manuscript and printed editions as correct over the inconsistent late occurrences from the original manuscript.⁷ It is important to note that in all instances of *Amlicites*, the word begins with *aml* and in all instances of *Amalekites* there is either an *e* or *a* between the *m* and *l*. Skousen recognizes this vowel problem, but minimizes it by calling it "only the intrusive *e*." Thus, *Amlicites* is always a three-syllable word and *Amalekites* is always a four-syllable word.

It seems to me that Skousen makes a stronger case for keeping the two groups separate, based both on spelling and on the narrative, than he does for uniting them. However, after the manuscripts yielded no conclusive answer, he accepted the ideas of Lyle Fletcher and John A. Tvedtnes⁸ to merge the two groups. This proposal has seen fairly wide acceptance.⁹

The rest of this paper will examine the narrative data and demonstrate that the Book of Mormon requires the Amlicites and Amalekites to be two separate peoples, even though they clearly have similar names.

The Chronological Problem

The first textual reference to either of these groups is the appearance of Amlici in Alma 2:1. The rise of Amlici was in the commencement of the fifth year of the reign of the judges. Amlici gains a following, and they call themselves Amlicites (Alma 2:11). They do battle with the Nephite [Page 271]armies. Amlici is killed by the sword of Alma the Younger, and his followers are defeated and scattered. This all occurs in the fifth year of the judges.

The first textual reference to the Amalekites occurs in Alma 21:2: “Now the Lamanites and the Amalekites and the people of Amulon had built a great city, which was called Jerusalem.” We must not fall into the trap of thinking that because this story appears nineteen chapters after the story of the Amlicites that it takes place at a later time. The text reveals that Alma 21 takes place “when Ammon and his brethren separated themselves in the borders of the land of the Lamanites” (Alma 21:1). This separation took place “in the first year of the judges” (Alma 17:6). The Amalekites very likely existed long before the first year, due to the fact that their city was already “great” when it was first discovered by Aaron in the first year of the judges. They continued to be a distinct people until the eighteenth year of the judges (Alma 43:4, 6).

Skousen addresses this time disparity. “The problem with the emendation *Amlicite(s)* for *Amalekites(s)* is that there is no mention of the Amlicites until the fifth year of the reign of the judges, when Amlici first appears in the narrative (see Alma 2:1–11).”¹⁰ Skousen suggests that the chronological issue might be related to imprecision in the story recorded for the sons of Mosiah. He offers: “We should not automatically assume that the city of Jerusalem was the first place where Aaron preached . . . There is no explicit statement about how long and where Aaron and his companions might have worked prior to reaching the city of Jerusalem.”¹¹

Could Aaron have taken more than five years to start his ministry in Jerusalem? The text explains that when Aaron separated from his brethren, he “took his journey towards the land which was called by the Lamanites, Jerusalem” (Alma 21:1). It does not explicitly say how long he took to get there, but the text follows with two explanatory verses about Jerusalem and its inhabitants and proceeds in verse four with, “And it came to pass that Aaron came to the city of Jerusalem, and first began to preach to the Amalekites” (Alma 21:4). There is room in the text for some time between separating from his brothers and arriving in Jerusalem, but could it have taken more than five years?

This story of Aaron ties into the story of Ammon. As recounted in Alma 17–20, Ammon goes to Ishmael and becomes a servant to King Lamoni. On his third or fourth day in Ishmael, Ammon was given instructions to go with the other servants to water the king’s flocks and to prepare the horses and chariots to carry King Lamoni to the city of Nephi to a great feast being held by his father in honor of his sons and [Page 272]his people. Due to the example and teachings of Ammon, Lamoni was converted and did not go to that feast. After the conversion of the king, a church was established in the land. Ammon is then told by the Lord to go to Middoni to free Aaron and others from prison. On the way to Middoni, they meet King Lamoni’s father on the highway, and he is very upset that Lamoni did not come to the feast.

This illustrates that a few weeks to a few months would have passed from the time that Ammon first arrived in Ishmael and Aaron and his brethren were in prison in Middoni. The only way for Aaron to have taken five years to get to Jerusalem is for Ammon to also have taken five years to get to Ishmael and begin his ministry.

Skousen offers another possibility: The Amalekites

... were after the order of the Nehors, as was Amlici himself. Nehor “began to establish a church after the manner of his preaching” (Alma 1:6) in the first year of the reign of the judges, the same year that the four sons of Mosiah left on their mission to the Lamanites. Thus the reference in Alma 21:4 to meeting the Amalekites (that is, Amlicites) may be an anachronistic use of the name Amlicite(s) in the original text to refer to followers of Nehor who later became identified as the Amlicites.¹²

Here Skousen shows that there are problems with this emendation. He notes the parallel events of the rise of Nehor and the departure of the sons of Mosiah. He does not make a connection between these two events other than to say they both occurred in the first year. He seems to imply support for a literal understanding that the Amalekite order of the Nehors was established by Nehor himself. His final sentence about the anachronistic use of the name accepts that the Amlicites and Amalekites are separate peoples unified only by their being after the order of Nehors. Thus, Skousen argues that the followers of Amlici from Alma 2 were Amlicites, but the separate group in Jerusalem became known as Amlicites at a later time because they were both after the order of the Nehors.

It is unclear if Skousen believes the people in Jerusalem later physically joined with the Amlicites, or if Amlicite became a symbolic name for those after the order of the Nehors. The symbolic name approach is not consistent with the text, as Alma the Younger never uses the term *Amlicite* to refer to the Nephites living in Ammonihah, even though the text says they were after the order of Nehor (Alma 15:15). It is likely that *Amlicite* was not a symbolic name but referred only to followers of Amlici.¹³ The order of Nehors was symbolic,¹⁴ and the Amalekites in Jerusalem likely never had contact with Nehor himself.¹⁵

[Page 273]J. Christopher Conkling also addresses this issue. He proposes:

It is highly unlikely that Amlici could rise to prominence with almost half the population's support, undertake a lively national election, receive an illegitimate coronation, raise a huge army, move major parts of the Nephite population, form alliances with the Lamanites, and manage three major battles all in one year (see Alma 2:2–3:25).¹⁶

In this, Conkling is surely correct, but he offers no further explanation as to how Amlici could have led the people who built the great city of Jerusalem before the time of the judges. There is nothing in that scenario that explains why Amlici's followers would have been found by Aaron in Lamanite territory five years before Amlici's rise in Zarahemla.

The Geographical Problem

There are also irreconcilable geographic differences between the Amlicite and Amalekite groups. Amlici attempted to take over Zarahemla and establish himself as king. The Amalekites lived in the city of Jerusalem, which was located “away joining the borders of Mormon” (Alma 21:1) in Lamanite territory. According to *Mormon's Map*,¹⁷ Sorenson places this city on the west side of the waters of Mormon, on the opposite side from where Alma the Elder baptized his people. The map shows that Jerusalem is approximately 160 miles south of Zarahemla, as the crow flies. The Amalekites are also mentioned as living in the Amulonite cities of Helam and Amulon around the thirteenth year of the reign of the judges (Alma 24:1).

When the Amlicites took up arms against the Nephites, they assembled themselves together “upon the hill Amnihu, which was east of the river Sidon” (Alma 2:15). The armies, led by Alma the Younger, drove the Amlicites to the south beyond the valley of Gideon. The Amlicites then crossed over to the west side of the river Sidon and joined with an army of the Lamanites. This combined army was defeated, and the survivors fled to the west and the north (Alma 2:36). Those fleeing armies were slain and driven on every hand until they entered into a “wilderness which was infested by wild and ravenous beasts” (Alma 2:37). Many of them died in the wilderness. Most of the Amlicites were destroyed, but the few survivors may have continued to the west and the north until they found the city of Ammonihah, an apostate Nephite city that lies to the west and north of Zarahemla (Alma 8:3–6). The Amlicites are never heard from again.

[Page 274]The text shows that, geographically, there was a very great distance between where the Amlicites lived, fought, and were eventually scattered, and the well-established Amalekite territory.

Differences in Religious Philosophy

The Amlicites wanted to “deprive [the people] of their rights and privileges of the church; for it was [their] intent to destroy the church of God” (Alma 2:4). An Amalekite, on the other hand, says, “Behold, we have built sanctuaries, and we do assemble ourselves together to worship God” (Alma 21:6). He contended with one of the sons of Mosiah (Aaron) using antichrist arguments typical of Nephite dissenters found in many other places in the Book of Mormon.¹⁸

Discovering the Origins of the Amalekites

In Alma 43, the Amalekites fight alongside the Zoramites and Lamanites. The armies are led by an Amalekite¹⁹ named Zerahemnah (Alma 43:5-6). His name, being so close to Zarahemla, indicates that he was also a Mulekite.²⁰

Mulekite²¹ dissention occurred during what Larson calls a “civil war”²² between the people of Zarahemla and the people of Nephi. It is thought the reason for the civil war is that the people of Zarahemla believed they had the right to rule, instead of King Benjamin, because they were direct descendants of King Zedekiah through Mulek.²³ Perhaps the Amalekites were these Mulekites, and after losing the struggle in the capitol city, they “[dissented] away unto the Lamanites” (Words of Mormon 1:16). They then built a new city for themselves in Lamanite territory. Could there be a better name for the city in which the rightful heir to the throne ruled than *Jerusalem*, the name the Amalekites chose for their city? Perhaps the leader of this group was named Amalek, a name found throughout the Old Testament. No date is given for this civil war, but it could be around 150 BC, sixty years before the reign of the judges.

Why is it that we have to piece together an origin story of the Amalekites rather than reading it explicitly in the text? It is quite unusual for Mormon to leave out the origins of a named people. If the scenario above is true, the Amalekites originated in the time before our current Book of Mosiah begins. That means Mormon did not leave this out of his record. The most likely scenario is that he included it in what came to be known as “the lost 116 pages.” In other words, it is likely we don’t know of their origins today because their origin story was in the chapter(s) lost from the Book of Mosiah.

[Page 275]Another plausible explanation for the origins of the Amalekites (but one I consider secondary) lies in Mosiah chapters 26–27. Starting in Mosiah 26:1–7, there was a very large group of people who dissented from the church. They disputed points of doctrine and “were a separate people as to their faith” (Mosiah 26:4). We know about the Amalekite faith; they did not believe in Jesus Christ and did not believe that anyone could know of things to come (Alma 21:5–10). These dissenters’ names were “blotted out” by Alma the Elder as he “did regulate all the affairs of the church” (Mosiah 26:36–37). It could be that this group became the Amalekites. Mosiah gave a strict command that there should be no persecution, and later the people “began to scatter abroad upon the face of the earth, yea, on the north and on the south” (Mosiah 27:3, 6). It is possible that these dissenters left, to the south, at this time when there were many groups leaving Zarahemla.

Aaron finds the Amalekites living with the Amulonites (Alma 21:2). Why would they have decided to live together? We know that Alma the Elder brought “children of Amulon and his brethren” with him when he returned to Zarahemla after being in bondage (Mosiah 25:12). These Amulonites denounced their heritage and took upon themselves the name of “Nephite.” But in the years and decades later, might some of the children of these former Amulonites have become unbelievers just like the children of Alma the Elder and King Mosiah? Might there have been some of the rising generation who remembered living with the Lamanites before Alma brought them to Zarahemla? Might there have been Amulonite families who were split when Alma led the people back to Zarahemla? The children left with their mothers while their fathers, who were guards over the people of Alma, were overcome with a deep sleep (Mosiah 24:19). Perhaps this break-off group consisted of a mix of children of the Amulonites and others including Mulekites. When they left Zarahemla, they went first to the Amulonites because they knew they would be well received because some of them had family connections. They distinguished themselves by taking on the name of their leader, presumably Amalek.

Why, then, would this potential origin for the Amalekites be left out of our Book of Mormon? Perhaps their origin story was never recorded in the large Plates of Nephi, so Mormon simply did not know what it was. Their dissention took place while Alma the Elder was the record keeper. Writing from Zarahemla, he knew there were colonies of people leaving the capitol and settling in other places, but he would not have known that one of them settled back with the Amulonites and called [Page 276]themselves Amalekites. Who might have known where the Amalekites came from? It is likely that Aaron might have been able to find this out. King Lamoni’s father should also have known where they came from, as he was king over all the land and “granted unto them that they should build sanctuaries” (Alma 22:7). Unfortunately, the individuals who may have known the Amalekites’ origins never

passed on that information to Alma the Younger, who engraved the Large Plates. Thirty years or more may have passed from the time of their founding to the time that Alma the Younger was writing about them.²⁴ Thus, if the recorders of the Large Plates were unaware, themselves, of the Amalekite origins, then Mormon had no way to include it in his compilation of the records.

Conclusion

Careful study of the Book of Mormon reveals that the Amalekites were a long-term group of Mulekite dissenters who lived in the Lamanite city of Jerusalem, worshiping God in their synagogues according to a typical antichrist theology. Amlici, on the other hand, led an unsuccessful flash-in-the-pan uprising to establish himself as king in Zarahemla and destroy the church of God. Skousen's critical textual analysis discovered more reasons to keep the two groups separate than to merge them, but he followed the ideas of other scholars and merged them anyway.²⁵ I believe there is more evidence against this conjectural emendation than there is for it. We should trust that, in this case, Oliver Cowdery corrected the spelling mistakes he made during the original dictation and that the Amlicites and the Amalekites are two separate peoples.

Notes

1. In the scholarly world, such emendations are not unusual and, in many cases, help to advance our understanding of what would otherwise be unclear. Since such changes are based on limited objective information colored by subjective (albeit expert subjective) deductions, it is possible for them to be open to differing conclusions. Hence, this paper.
2. Royal Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 742.
3. Royal Skousen, "Alma 2:11–12," *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon Part Three: Mosiah 17–Alma 20* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 2006), 1605–1609. Skousen's thinking on the "sameness" of Amalekites and Amlicites dates back to at least 2002. See Royal Skousen, "The Systematic Text of the Book of Mormon," in *Uncovering the Original Text of the Book of Mormon: History and Findings of the Critical Text Project*, ed. M. Gerald Bradford and Alison V.P. Coutts (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002), 54. In this paper, I address only his culminating explanation provided in his later work.
4. Edmond C. Briggs (reporting an interview with Emma Smith), "A Visit to Nauvoo in 1856," *Journal of History* 9 (October 1916): 454. "When my husband was translating the Book of Mormon, I wrote a part of it, as he dictated each sentence, word for word, and when he came to proper names he could not pronounce, or long words, he spelled them out, and while I was writing them, if I made a mistake in spelling, he would stop me and correct my spelling, although it was impossible for him to see how I was writing them down at the time."
5. Royal Skousen, "Alma 2:11–12," 1608. "In fact, in the original manuscript Oliver Cowdery frequently misspelled *Amalickiah* as *Ameleckiah* (28 times) and *Amelickiah* (21 times)."
6. Royal Skousen. "The Original and Printer's Manuscripts," at a Book of Mormon Lecture Series, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, February 26th 2013. Lecture. <http://mi.byu.edu/watch-skousens-3-part-lecture-series-on-the-book-of-mormon-critical-text-project/>.
7. There would be no confusion concerning *Amlicites* vs. *Amalekites* if the original manuscript were extant for the very first occurrence of the word *Amalekites*. Understanding that we, sadly, don't have that manuscript, we are left to wonder if the two words were simply uncorrected spelling variations. Contra Skousen and a few others, I believe we should trust that when he was making the printer's manuscript, Oliver looked back at the spelling from the first instance and wrote it correctly in the printer's manuscript thereafter.
8. Skousen's full conclusion reads: "The emendation of *Amlicite(s)* for *Amalekite(s)* was first suggested by Lyle Fletcher in an unpublished paper he wrote on this question in the early 1990s. John A. Tvedtnes, on pages 324–325 in *The Most Correct Book: Insights from a Book of Mormon Scholar* (Salt Lake City: Cornerstone, 1999) proposes that the Amalekites might be the Amlicites and provides considerable evidence to show that these Amalekites were Nephite dissenters." We do not have access to the unpublished works of Lyle Fletcher. Tvedtnes does not address this issue on pages 324–325 but does take it up on page 293 of *The*

Most Correct Book. It reads, “But who were the Amalekites? Were they the same as the Amlicites, a Nephite apostate group who had joined the Lamanites in the time of Alma the elder (Alma 2:24)? If so, why the change in spelling 19 chapters later? We simply cannot be sure.” Tvedtnes wonders if there is a connection, but offers no evidence to support them being the same people. Another scholar who supposed this connection was John L. Sorenson. Skousen does not reference his idea specifically, but he would have been aware of it. Sorenson wrote “Book of Mormon Peoples,” in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, in 1992 (http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Book_of_Mormon_Peoples). “One of the earliest groups of Nephite dissenters was the Amlicites. Ambitious Amlici, a disciple of Nehor, likely claiming noble birth (Alma 51:8), gathered a large body of followers and challenged the innovative Nephite system of rule by judges instituted by Mosiah 2; Amlici wished to be king. When his aim was defeated by ‘the voice of the people,’ he plotted an attack coordinated with the Lamanites that nearly succeeded in capturing Zarahemla, the Nephite capital. Loyal forces under Alma 2 finally succeeded in destroying or scattering the enemy (Alma 2:1–31). Amlici was slain, but the fate of his forces is unclear. Likely, elements of them went with the defeated Lamanite army to the land of Nephi. The name Amlicite is not used thereafter. Another group of Nephite dissenters, the Amalekites, lived in the land of Nephi (Alma 21:2–3; 43:13). Their origin is never explained. However, based on the names and dates, it is possible that they constituted the Amlicite remnant previously mentioned, their new name possibly arising by ‘lamanitization’ of the original.” Here Sorenson offers a solution to the geographical problem noted later in the paper. However, we are told that the Amlicite remnant was scattered north and west, and the retreating Lamanites would have gone south. Sorenson does not address the chronological problem.

9. J. Christopher Conkling, “Alma’s Enemies: The Case of the Lamanites, Amlicites, and Mysterious Amalekites,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 14/1 (Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2005): 108–17, 130–32.
<http://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/jbms/14/1/S00013-50be6cccd0a2511Conkling.pdf>. Val Larson, “In His Footsteps: Ammon₁ and Ammon₂,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* (2013), 3:85–113.
<https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/in-his-footsteps-ammon-and-ammon/>. “How Were the Amlicites and Amalekites Related?” *Book of Mormon Central* (27 May 2016).
<https://knowwhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/how-were-the-amlicites-and-amalekites-related>.
 “AMALEKITES.” *Book of Mormon Onomasticon* (BYU Harold B. Lee Library),
<https://onoma.lib.byu.edu/index.php/AMALEKITES>.
10. Royal Skousen, “Alma 2:11–12,” 1608–9.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. See Alma 2:11. Also note that the Amlicites, as a people, ceased to exist after the battle in which their leader, Amlici, was killed.
14. See Brant Gardner, “Mormon’s Editorial Method and Meta-Message,” FAIR Mormon 2008 Conference. South Towne Exposition Center, Sandy, Utah, August 7th 2008.
<https://www.fairmormon.org/fair-conferences/2008-fair-conference/2008-mormons-editorial-method-and-meta-message>. “Even more than Mormon’s coloration of Nehor, however, is the fact that Mormon names an entire religious movement after him. The evidence indicates that the facets of the religion that Nehor preached were precisely those found in the court of Noah long before we see Nehor on the scene. Nehor was not the earliest practitioner nor even the most infamous. The text’s very next story emphasizes the rift created by the Nehorite Amlici; clearly a much more serious social disruption. I suggest that Mormon intentionally named that religion for a murderer because he wanted to clearly link it with an unsavory connotation. I strongly suspect that it was called by some other name in the source plates and that the identification of “order of the Nehors” is Mormon’s label written long after the fact.”
15. Nehor himself is mentioned only in the first year of the judges in Zarahemla (Alma 1:2–15). Nehor’s order or profession is referenced to Amlici in Zarahemla in the fifth year (Alma 2:1), the people in Ammonihah in the tenth year (Alma 15:15), and finally in Jerusalem with the Amalekites and Amulonites in the first year (Alma 21:4). It is possible that Nehor lived in Jerusalem before going to Zarahemla, but there is no evidence of this from the text.
16. J. Christopher Conkling, “Alma’s Enemies,” 114.
17. John L. Sorenson, *Mormon’s Map* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies,

- 2000), inside front cover.
18. See, for example, Sherem in Jacob 7, Nehor in Alma 1, Korihor in Alma 30, and the Zoramites in Alma 31.
 19. “Chapter 33: Alma 43–51.” *Book of Mormon Student Manual*, (2009), 248–55.
<https://churchofjesuschrist.org/manual/book-of-mormon-student-manual/chapter-33-alma-43-51?lang=eng>.
 20. “ZERAHEMNAH,” BYU Harold B. Lee Library, <https://onoma.lib.byu.edu/index.php/ZERAHEMNAH>
 21. Although modern writers use *Mulekite* to refer to those claiming Mulek as an ancestor, the actual term *Mulekite* is not attested in the Book of Mormon.
 22. Val Larson, “In His Footsteps: Ammon₁ and Ammon₂,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* (2013), 3:91. <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/in-his-footsteps-ammon-and-ammon/>.
 23. Mosiah 25 shows that even long after Benjamin established peace in Zarahemla, the people of Zarahemla and the people of Nephi were counted differently and assembled themselves in separate bodies to hear Mosiah read the record of Zeniff. Mosiah 25:13 shows marginalization of the people of Zarahemla by the Nephites. “And now all the people of Zarahemla were numbered with the Nephites, and this because the kingdom had been conferred upon none but those who were descendants of Nephi.” Note that later the Mulekites are believed to be the king men who took over Zarahemla around 62 B.C. (Alma 51, 61–62) (see also “The Mulekite Connection,” *Step by Step Through the Book of Mormon*, by Alan C. Miner, <http://ancientamerica.org/library/media/HTML/k3hid744/The%20Mulekite%20Connection.htm?n=0>), and that about ten years later Zarahemla fell again to a Mulekite named Coriantumr (Helaman 1:15).
 24. The events of Mosiah 26 took place between 120 and 100 bc. Alma heard the stories of the sons of Mosiah in about 77 bc. See Alma 17.
 25. I greatly respect and revere Royal Skousen’s work on the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project. The fact is that if we really look at what he actually found on the manuscripts, there was absolutely no reason for him to change the Amalekites to become Amlicites. I believe he liked Lyle Fletcher’s and others’ ideas to merge the two groups; he liked that it solved the mystery of the unknown origins of the Amalekites. Perhaps, as he was reviewing the manuscripts, this desire to solve the mystery caused him to read more into the evidence than was actually there, and his judgment was affected by confirmation bias.