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Great Sand Dunes National Park

Colorado National Parks

1948 Memorandum from Regional Director M.R. Tillotson Outlining Excavation Policies

M. R. Tillotson

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REGION THREE
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Region Three 48-120

December 17, 1948.




MEMORANDUM for all Region Three Superintendents.

For the benefit of the several new employees at areas containing, or located near, archeological remains, it is believed desirable to re-state an important National Park Service policy. Manufacture of fake antiquities, and unsystematic digging in ruins, or personal collecting of archeological specimens, are highly reprehensible activities which we cannot permit and will not have carried on by National Park Service personnel.

Excavations conducted by individual employees in off-duty hours and on private lands with the owner's permission are not actually illegal (as would be such work on Federal or state lands without a permit) or specifically covered by the General Rules and Regulations. But such excavations -- unless carried on with proper authorization as a part of our program, or to salvage materials currently being destroyed -- will bring criticism on the National Park Service and weaken our position on enforcement of laws against pothunting; and are decidedly undesirable in themselves, because it is highly unlikely that a properly organized job can be carried through to completion by sporadic off-time work, or that perishable materials will be properly cared for and exposed features adequately protected.

Such activities constitute a serious breach of professional ethics if conducted by professional personnel and an even graver act by non-professionals; and in either case, conflict with the intent and spirit of laws and regulations and with the objectives and policies of the National Park Service. If indulged in, they will be considered to warrant severe penalization.


M. R. Tillotson,
Regional Director.