

University of Northern Colorado

UNCOpen

Great Sand Dunes National Park

Colorado National Parks

Various Correspondence Relating to Archeological Artifacts Found in Great Sand Dunes National Monument

John S. McLaughlin

Howard S. Rines

Paul R. Franke

E. P. Leavitt

Louis Schellbach

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digscholarship.unco.edu/grsa>

May 29, 1941

Mr. Howard S. Rines,
Great Sand Dunes National Monument,
Alamosa, Colorado.

Dear Mr. Rines:

Reference is made to your memorandum of the 26th, concerning the Folsom artifacts found in the vicinity of the monument.

You mention that further information may be secured from Mr. Carl Erickson of Monte Vista, Colorado, and this is to request that you contact Mr. Erickson at the first opportunity and secure such information as he may have to offer in the matter.

Very truly yours,

John S. McLaughlin,
Coordinating Superintendent.

TJM/bcs

RECEIVED

JUN - 2 1941

MESA VERDE NAT'L PARK

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Great Sand Dunes National Monument

June 3, 1941

DISTRIBUTION	
1	Superintendent
	Asst. Supt.
	Chief Clerk
	Asst. Personnel
3	Chief Ranger
2	Warden
	Storekeeper
	Mechanic
	Mainl. Foreman
	Electrician
	C.C.C. Office
	Commissioner
	Engineer
	Secretary
4	Files

Memorandum for the Superintendent, Mesa Verde National Park:

Reference is made to your letter of May 29, 1941 in which request is made that Mr. Carl Erickson of Monte Vista, Colorado be contacted relative to recent finds of Folsom artifacts.

Mr. Erickson, who is president of the Monte Vista Archeological Society, was contacted this morning at Monte Vista, Colorado and proved to be a rural mail carrier out of the Monte Vista Post Office.

Mr. Erickson could give no further facts other than those stated in the article excepting as to location. He would not state definitely what sections the work has been done in, but to all appearances it seems the work has been done in about Sec. 8, Twp 39 N, R 12 E. He states that all work has been done south of State Highway N. 150 and from the description given and trails noted, the location given is deduced. However the location is definitely outside the Great Sand Dunes National Monument, being about three to four miles west and one south of the boundary.



Howard S. Rines

DISTRIBUTION	
Superintendent	
Asst. Supt.	
Chief Clerk	
Accts.-Personel	
Chief Ranger	
Naturalist	
Storekeeper	
Mechanic	
Maint.-Foreman	
Electrician	
C. C. C. Office	
Commissioner	
Engineer	
Secretary	
Files Memorandum	

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Great Sand Dunes National Monument

May 26, 1941

RECEIVED

MAY 27 1941

MESA VERDE NAT'L PARK

Files Memorandum for the Superintendent, Mesa Verde National Park;

Enclosed herewith find 10-37 executed in duplicate as requested by your office.

Reference is made to your request for further information regarding the Folsom artifacts found in the vicinity of the monument. Inquiry was made of Mr. Alexis McKinney, City Editor of the Alamosa Daily Courier, this morning in the endeavor to ascertain further details. Mr. McKinney stated that the article as printed was sent in by Mr. Carl Erickson (I believe that was the name, at any rate the name was given in the article) of Monte Vista, Colorado and that he (McKinney) has no further information. He suggests that for further information Mr. Erickson, who accompanied the party on the trip, be contacted. If you desire further information you may write Mr. Erickson or I will personally contact him if you wish, however I do not know him personally.


Howard S. Rines

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK
MANCOS, COLO.

0-40

July 24, 1935

The Director,
National Park Service
Washington, D. C.

Attention Mr. Louis Shellbach.

Dear Mr. Director:

A copy of Mr. Shellbach's letter of May 8, regarding certain correspondence which we have had with Mr. Frank Spencer of Alamosa, Colorado, has been referred to me for attention. Delay in reply is occasioned by the time required for an investigation.

While in Santa Fe, early in May, at the A. A. A. S. meeting I had the opportunity of discussing certain finds of archaeological value in the Great Sand Dunes with Mr. Frank Spencer of the Adams State Teachers College, and Dr. E. P. Renaud of Denver University.

Dr. Renaud has been very active in the archaeological field of Eastern Colorado and has done much work in the San Luis Valley. His findings have been published in the Archaeological Survey of Eastern Colorado (Third report) University of Denver, March 1933, pages 19 to 21; and the Archaeological Survey of Colorado (Fourth report) seasons of 1933 and 1934, University of Denver, March 1935, pages 21 to 22. Dr. Renaud is one of the West's most active workers in the so called Yuma - Folsom complex.

All of the archaeological discoveries made in the vicinity of the Great Sand Dunes have been surface finds. The shifting sands uncover from time to time much evidence of early Indian occupation, and a thorough study will no doubt develop valuable information as to what the attraction or purpose was to bring these various tribes into the heart of the dunes. The artifacts found range from the surveyor's transit to guns of the earliest white explorers and the points manufactured by Early Folsom man. The material of the Arapahoes is found alongside the pot sherds and skeletons of the Pueblos.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK
MANCOS, COLO.

All of this material is now in the hands of private collectors with only a few scattered records in the local newspapers as to where these collections are.

There is great need for a comprehensive archaeological survey of the dunes area. A survey for facts and information of the sand mountains and the many large lakes, teeming with water fowl, which are adjacent to the monument should be undertaken. We at Mesa Verde have hopes of conducting a survey of this type for our own park and if it ever gets under way we can probably take our experienced crew and in a month's time among the dunes we can cover the area and obtain much basic information for administrative and educational development.

There is need of a seasonal custodian at the Great Sand Dunes National Monument. An additional permanent ranger at the Mesa Verde National Park could be assigned during the summer months to the Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Wheeler National Monument. With a seasonal contact this established we no doubt will exercise some control over the materials discovered.

This, the Mesa Verde, park museum could be designated a temporary repository for the Great Sand Dunes collections, until such a time when the monument has its own buildings and custodian. A set-up of this type will no doubt find much favor among residents of the San Luis Valley and be the means of having much of the materials found in the dunes returned to the government.

With warm personal regards.

Sincerely,

Paul R. Franke
Park Naturalist.

Noted

E. P. Leavitt
Superintendent.

CC:
Superintendent
Park Naturalist.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

0-40

May 8, 1935.

The Superintendent,
Mesa Verde National Park,
Mancos, Colorado.

Attention: Mr. Paul Franke.

Dear Mr. Leavitt:

A copy of your letter dated March 15, to Mr. Frank Spencer of the Adams State Teachers College, Monte Vista, Colorado, has been referred to me for attention.

The reference to Folsom points being found in the Great Sand Dunes National Monument seems of sufficient importance to warrant further investigation and steps undertaken to prevent vandalism of the site. A carbon copy of the above letter was referred to you by Mr. Leavitt and I am making inquiry as to any suggestions you have made regarding it, in order that the findings might be called to the attention of some responsible institution with a view toward investigating the site.

If you have not already done so, I would suggest your calling Mr. Nusbaum's attention to it. Perhaps his institution would be sufficiently interested to follow it up or report it to some other institution or archaeologist who might be sufficiently interested to investigate further.

I would appreciate hearing from you as to just what has been done. In the event that no action has been undertaken, I shall contact Dr. Roberts of the Bureau of American Ethnology here and report the finding of the Folsom points at the Great Sand Dunes National Monument.

With warm personal regards, I am

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Mesa Verde National Park

RECEIVED
MAY 13 1935

Sincerely yours,

Louis Schellbach
Louis Schellbach,

Assistant Chief, Eastern Museum Division.

SPK

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK
MANCOS, COLO.

March 15, 1935

C-40

Mr. Frank G. Spencer
Adams State Teachers College
Monte Vista, Colorado

Dear Mr. Spencer:

I am interested in what you had to say in your letter of March 9 regarding the finding of Folsom points and fossil remains in the Great Sand Dunes. This is an extremely interesting find and I shall report it to Park Naturalist Franke and Ranger-Historian Watson.

I agree with you that it would be a valuable contribution if these artifacts could be collected, preserved and classified. I note that many of these artifacts are being removed and will be lost to the region. I do not know of any way to prevent this unless we had a custodian appointed, and I do not know how this can be done because of lack of funds. Have you any suggestions? Would it be possible to appoint some one as an honorary custodian at a salary of \$1 per month, who would have authority to enforce the rules and regulations so far as it may be practicable, and to prevent hunting and carrying away of such artifacts. Along this line, it might be possible for them to secure such artifacts as are collected unlawfully by visitors to the monument. These could be sent down to Mesa Verde and be preserved in our museum until some future time when a small museum might be available in the Sand Dunes.

I have just been advised that the city of Alamosa is planning the construction of a road to the Great Sand Dunes National Monument as a relief project, and a letter has been sent to the Director at Washington to see if he has any objection. I should think that this would be a very desirable project, but will expect to hear from the Director on the matter before long.

I am looking forward to the opportunity of meeting you and Mrs. Spencer, and I hope that this can be arranged soon.

Very truly yours,

E. F. Leavitt,
Superintendent

CC:
The Director
Ansel Hall
Paul R. Franke

RO File

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL MONUMENT
Alamosa, Colorado

April 9, 1952

740-02.3

Memorandum

To: General Superintendent

From: Superintendent, Great Sand Dunes

Subject: Research by Colorado School of Mines at Great Sand Dunes

Professor Paul H. Keating of the Graduate Committee at the Colorado School of Mines and I have exchanged correspondence on the possibilities of the Great Sand Dunes as a research subject for graduate candidates. In my opinion such research would be invaluable to us as we actually know so little about our main exhibit.

In investigations of this kind, however, I am not quite certain as to the proper procedure from the standpoint of the National Park Service. Since there is no danger of alteration of natural features or necessity of collecting, will it be sufficient for me to require that we be furnished copies of all the findings and conclusions and that the usual National Park Service regulations be observed?

Glen T. Bean
Superintendent

In duplicate.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

SEP 29 1939

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Santa Fe, New Mexico.
REGION THREE

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Handwritten: 740-02
pas

September 28, 1939.

Memorandum for the Director:

In the absence of pertinent files which were left at Mesa Verde, I am not in a position to refer you by dates to previous correspondence reference a technical study of Great Sand Dunes undertaken by Dr. Joseph E. Upson, graduate student of Dr. Kirk Bryan of Harvard University, during the past summer.

I enclose for your advance information a copy of Dr. Upson's first informal report to me on the progress of his work. This should be regarded as of a more or less confidential nature as Dr. Upson intends to return for further study next year to further fortify this advance hypothesis.

Handwritten signature: Juse Hunsbarn
Senior Archaeologist.

Encl. 1739112.
cc: Mr. Treger.
Dr. Gould.
Mr. Tolson.

In Camp
Great Sand Dunes Nat'l Mon.
August 13, 1939.

COPY

Mr. J. L. Nusbaum
Mesa Verde, Colorado

Dear Mr. Nusbaum:

After some delay and experiencing considerable difficulty in becoming located, we have finally established a camp about 200 yards east of Colorado State route No. 150 and about half a mile north of the main spring at the end of the road about at the present entrance to the Monument. Mr. Rines has been very cordial and gave us much assistance as he could.

Our time here is now limited to about two weeks and all we can hope to do is make a general reconnaissance and collect sand samples. Already some general ideas concerning the regional relationships and past history of the dunes are shaping up. I think they may turn out to be one of the greatest described bodies of the "Blow-out" type of dune, but that hypothesis needs verification. Also, I suspect that we can demonstrate two stages of dune-sand accumulations. We may be able to show correlations with Pleistocene glacial stages, or with post-Wisconsin climatic changes. You realize, of course, that these are just present working hypothesis. I have a couple more concerning the actual origin of the dune accumulation which probably study of sand samples will prove or disprove as the case may be.

One thing is certain. It will take considerable more work next summer to finish the project up.

We are planning to be here, except for an occasional trip to Alamosa, all the time up to about August 26 when Mrs. Upson and I will take her mother to Albuquerque to entrain to the East. We will not return to the dunes after that. If you could visit us before August 26 we would be very glad to see you, and if you bring a bed-roll we will be very happy to give you a place to put it down for the night.

I realize that this is rather short notice and if you are going to be in Mesa Verde during the first week in September, and cannot visit the dunes earlier, perhaps Mrs. Upson and I could stop and talk things over on our way back to Idaho.

Yours very sincerely,

/s/ Joseph E. Upson.