Circular relating to historic and prehistoric ruins of the Southwest and their preservation

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CIRCULAR

RELATING TO

HISTORIC AND PREHISTORIC RUINS
OF THE SOUTHWEST

AND

THEIR PRESERVATION.

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1904.
HISTORIC AND PREHISTORIC RUINS OF THE SOUTHWEST AND THEIR PRESERVATION.

By Edgar L. Hewett.

Department of the Interior,
General Land Office,
Washington, D. C., October 1, 1904.

Sir: I transmit herewith a report prepared at the request of this office by Prof. Edgar L. Hewett, formerly president of the New Mexico Normal University at Las Vegas, N. Mex., in regard to the historic and prehistoric ruins of the Southwest, and their preservation.

I also transmit herewith a map showing the location of different ruins, and photographs illustrating the same, and have to request that said report, map, and photographs be printed, as they contain much valuable information in regard to prehistoric ruins.

Very respectfully,

W. A. Richards,
Commissioner.

The Secretary of the Interior.

Washington, D. C., September 3, 1904.

Dear Sir: I beg leave to hand you herewith a memorandum relative to the historic and prehistoric ruins of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah.

I believe that in what is said relative to the necessity for speedy action looking toward the preservation of these ruins I reflect the sentiment of all who have seriously thought of this subject. I can testify to the general appreciation of the excellent work of your Office in this matter in recent years.

I beg leave to remain, with sincere respect, very truly yours,

Edgar L. Hewett,
123 Maryland Avenue NE.

The Commissioner of the General Land Office,
Washington, D. C.

MEMORANDUM CONCERNING THE HISTORIC AND PREHISTORIC RUINS OF ARIZONA, NEW MEXICO, COLORADO AND UTAH, AND THEIR PRESERVATION.

The importance of the large number of historic and prehistoric ruins scattered over the semi-arid region of the southwestern part of the United States has gradually come to be recognized. Every cliff dwelling, every prehistoric tower, communal house, shrine and burial mound is an object which can contribute something to the advancement of knowledge, and hence is worthy of preservation. Knowledge of the extent, location and nature of these ruins has been accumulating
for many years. We now know them to be very numerous and of
great value.

The question of the preservation of this vast treasury of informa-
tion relative to our prehistoric tribes has come to be a matter of much
concern to the American people. Fortunately there seems to be no
barrier to the speedy accomplishment of this. By the prompt exercise
of the authority lodged in various branches of the Interior Department,
the preservation of the ruins is assured. I shall endeavor to show
that there is urgent need for the immediate exercise of this authority.
This done, the work of legislation to the end that these regions may
be made a perpetual source of education and enjoyment for the
American people as well as for travelers from foreign lands may pro-
cceed with the careful deliberation which the subject demands.

Unquestionably some of these regions are sufficiently rich in historic
and scientific interest and scenic beauty to warrant their organization
into permanent national parks. Many others should be temporarily
withdrawn and allowed to revert to the public domain after the ruins
thereon have been examined by competent authority, the collections
therefrom properly cared for, and all data that can be secured made a
matter of permanent record. General legislation providing for the
creation and administration of such parks and providing for the exca-
vation of ruins in the interests of science only is urgently needed. It
is well known that during recent years an extensive traffic has arisen
in relics from these ruins. In securing these, buildings, mounds, etc.,
have been destroyed. These relics are priceless when secured by
proper scientific methods and of comparatively little value when scat-
tered about either in museums or private collections without accompa-
nying records. No scientific man is true to the highest ideals of
science who does not protest against this destructive work, and it will
be a lasting reproach upon our Government if it does not use its power
to restrain it.

With a view to furnishing concise information upon which preserv-
ative measures may be based I have compiled the accompanying map,
showing by geographical districts the location of the most important
ruins in the pueblo region. My sources of information have been
both official and unofficial, and the work is based upon the highest
authority obtainable. However, the map is not intended to be mathe-
metrically correct. It will show, approximately, the location of impor-
tant ruins. Some may have entirely disappeared since the maps were
made from which this compilation is made, and more recent surveys
might require important modifications. It may serve as a beginning
for something more exact and more complete. I have prepared to
accompany this a memorandum concerning the ruins located on each
district, and have taken the liberty to point out how adequate protec-
tion may be afforded such as are on the public domain.

Reference to the accompanying map will show at a glance that the
distribution of the prehistoric tribes of the Southwest was determined
by the drainage system. The great basins of the Rio Grande, the San
Juan, the Little Colorado and the Gila constitute the four great seats
of prehistoric culture of the so-called pueblo region. The remains of
this ancient culture are scattered extensively over these four areas, and
it is not to be hoped nor would it be a service to science to attempt to
preserve all these remains. They are of the three great types, pueblo
ruins, cliff houses, and cavate dwellings, with their accompanying
burial mounds, kivas, shrines, etc., and are practically innumerable. All measures for their preservation should look toward the encouragement of research and the advancement of knowledge, and not toward its restriction. I am of the opinion that if the principal groups or districts of ruins of each great culture area can be protected by the Department of the Interior, and no excavation permitted thereon except by responsible parties bearing proper permission from the Department, the highest interests of the people will be upheld.

I have shown on the accompanying map that the majority of the ruins of the four great basins are embraced in 20 districts. The circles on the map are not intended to fix absolutely the boundaries of these districts. They are merely intended to show approximately how the ruins may be grouped for convenience in protection.

The districts are grouped as follows:

I. The Rio Grande Basin:
1. The Pajarito Park district.
2. The Pecos Pueblo district.
3. The Gran Quivira district.
4. The Jemez district.
5. The Acoma district.

II. The San Juan Basin:
1. The Aztec district.
2. The Mesa Verde district.
3. The Chaco Cañon district.
4. The Cañon de Chelly district.
5. The Bluff district.

III. The Little Colorado Basin:
1. The Tusayan district.
2. The Flagstaff district.
3. The Holbrook district.
4. The Zuñi district.

IV. The Gila Basin:
1. The Rio Verde district.
2. The San Carlos district.
3. The Lower Gila district.
4. The Middle Gila district.
5. The Upper Gila district.
6. The San Francisco River district.

A few illustrations are inserted to show more in detail the character of some important ruins.

Following is a brief memorandum showing the nature, extent and condition of the ruins on each district:

1. RIO GRANDE BASIN.

This culture area, lying wholly in New Mexico, embraces the Rio Grande Valley with its tributaries from Ojo Caliente on the north to Socorro on the south and from Acoma on the west to the plains east of the Manzana Mountains.

1. PAJARITO PARK DISTRICT.

This district lies between the Rio Grande on the east and the Jemez Mountains on the west, and extends from Ojo Caliente on the north to Cochiti on the south. In the northern part are the ruins of Homayo, Houiri (Ho-we-re), and Pose on Ojo Caliente Creek. Ten miles west, below El Rito, is the large ruin of Sepawi (Se-paw-we). Near the village of Abiquiu, on the Rio Chama, is the important ruin of Tsiwari (Tsi-wa-re). These are all pueblo ruins, and not well preserved.

The central portion of the district is the Pajarito Park proper, the region that has for some years been under withdrawal by the General
Land Office and favorably reported on for a national park, for which it has many advantages, being of great scenic beauty, accessible, and one of the richest in the Southwest in well-preserved prehistoric remains. It contains innumerable cavate houses, a vast number of small pueblo ruins, and the ruins of the great communal dwellings of Puye, Otowi, Tsankawi (Tsan-ke-we), Navakwi (Nav-a-kwe), and Pajarito or Tchregga. Vandalism has greatly diminished among these ruins since the park has been under withdrawal.

In the southern part of this district, between the Rito de los Frijoles and Cochiti, are the ruins of six pueblos, and a considerable number of cavate houses, the interesting Cueva Pintada (painted cave), and the famous shrines known as the "Stone Lions of Potrero de las Vacas and Potrero de los Idolos."

2. PECOS DISTRICT.

The principal ruins of this district are those of the old pueblo of Pecos on the abandoned Pecos Pueblo grant. These are very important ruins, consisting of the two large communal houses and the remains of the old mission church, the first mission founded on the soil of the United States. These are the only ones of the numerous ruins in the upper Pecos valley that can be preserved. All others are well-nigh obliterated.

3. GRAN QUIVIRA DISTRICT.

These interesting ruins lie on the plains east of the Manzano Mountains. The principal ones are those of Tabira (Gran Quivira), Abo, and Quarai. All are pueblo ruins of the historic epoch, and at each place are the ruins of interesting mission churches. The ruins of this district should be officially investigated.

4. JEMEZ DISTRICT.

The ruins of 17 ancient pueblos are recorded as being located in the Jemez Valley, north of Jemez pueblo. Most of them have not been accurately located. Such of them as are still preserved and on public lands are within the limits of the proposed Jemez Forest Reserve, now temporarily withdrawn. The most important ruins in the district are those of the old pueblo of Giusewa. They lie 12 miles north of Jemez pueblo, and include the ruins of the stately old mission church of San Diego de Jemez, built early in the seventeenth century. An investigation of this district is needed.

5. ACOMA DISTRICT.

A large number of valuable pueblo ruins are scattered over this district to the south and southwest of the pueblo of Acoma and southeast to the neighborhood of Magdalena. Many others of importance are to the north and west, especially in the Cebollita Valley, south of Grants. It is a region of great interest, the pueblo of Acoma itself being one of the most interesting objects in the Southwest, as it has the distinction of being the oldest continuously inhabited settlement in the United States, with the possible exception of Oraibi. Near by it is the famous Mesa Encantada. Unfortunately there has been but little investigation of this district, so that we have no important accounts of its ruins. It is a district that is greatly in need of official examination.
IL. SAN JUAN BASIN.

The ruins of the San Juan Basin consist of both large and small communal houses and true cliff dwellings in great numbers. They are scattered in numerous, irregular groups over the contiguous portions of New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona. All the ruins of the San Juan and its tributaries have suffered much from destructive collectors.

1. AZTEC DISTRICT.

The most important ruins on this district are the group of large communal dwellings near Aztec, N. Mex. They are on private lands and well cared for, their owner apparently appreciating their value. Numerous other pueblo ruins exist in the district, but it is doubtful if any are so situated as to permit of their protection by the Government.

2. MESA VERDE DISTRICT.

In this district are the finest specimens of true cliff dwellings. They are very numerous in the canions of Mesa Verde and along the Mancos River. Cliff Palace is justly one of the most famous works of prehistoric man in existence. Numerous pueblo and cliff ruins are distributed along the McElmo, the Yellowjacket and the Hovenweep. On the whole, this is one of the most interesting of all prehistoric districts. A portion of it is under withdrawal by the General Land Office, pending the creation of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings National Park. The intelligent interest of the people of Colorado has done much toward the preservation of these ruins. However, the entire district has suffered much from vandalism, a majority of the burial mounds having been destroyed. A national park in this region would be of great educational value.

3. CHACO CAÑON DISTRICT.

This district embraces the great ruins of Pueblo Bonito, Pueblo Alto, Chettro Kettle, Hungo Pavie, Kin Kale, Una Vida, Wejigi, Kinbineola, Tuba Kin, Peñasco Blanco, Kin Kle Zin, Tala Kin, Kin Ya Ah, Kin Ah Zin, Sin Kle Zin, Kin Kle Tsoi, Casa Chiquito, Casa Rinconado, and Casa Morena.

Nowhere else is there such a splendid group of prehistoric buildings in a fair state of preservation. They have been made the subject of special investigation by the Hyde exploring expedition of New York, under Dr. George H. Pepper. A splendid collection from this district is installed in the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. In due time we shall doubtless have a full report of this excellent piece of work. This district has also been made the subject of a special investigation by Mr. S. J. Holsinger, whose comprehensive manuscript report, with accompanying photographs, in the office of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, affords much valuable information.

4. CAÑON DE CHELLY DISTRICT.

The ruins of this district are mostly in Cañon de Chelly and its tributary Cañon del Muerto, although many others are scattered along the lower Chinlee valley. They are, for the most part, pueblo and cave ruins. They have been specially studied and reported on by Mr. Cosmos Mindellef. A large collection of pottery from here has
recently been acquired by the Brooklyn Institute of Science and Art. The preservation of these ruins has been made a matter of special care by the Secretary of the Interior.

5. BLUFF DISTRICT.

Comparatively little is known of the numerous ruins in southeastern Utah. They have been explored and the district mapped by Dr. T. Mitchell Prudden, of New York City, but as yet no close investigations have been undertaken. Ruins are very numerous along Montezuma Creek, Recapture Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Butler Wash, Comb Wash and Grand Gulch. The caves of the Cottonwood and its tributaries have been investigated by the Hyde exploring expedition, and the collections therefrom placed in the American Museum of Natural History. These are important relics of ancient "basket makers."

III. LITTLE COLORADO BASIN.

This extensive region embraced in the valley of the Little Colorado and its tributaries is preeminently a region of pueblo ruins, though some cave dwellings are found. It is especially rich in prehistoric pottery. Because of its wealth of relics this region has suffered more than any other from the traffic in prehistoric wares. However, we are fortunate in that Dr. J. Walter Fewkes of the Bureau of American Ethnology has made the districts of the Little Colorado a subject of research for many years. His voluminous reports on this region have put us in possession of a vast amount of information on the archaeology and ethnology of the Southwest. His collections from Sikyatki for the National Museum, made in 1895, with the assistance of Mr. F. W. Hodge of the Smithsonian Institution, together with the collections made from the Holbrook district by Doctors Fewkes and Hough, form, probably, the most valuable collection of prehistoric pottery in existence. Another extensive collection of pottery from this region may be seen in the Field Columbian Museum in Chicago.

1. TUSAYAN DISTRICT.

The Hopi Plateau is a region of pueblo ruins. The buildings are not well preserved, and there are probably no ruins in the district that demand permanent preservation. It is, however, exceedingly important that they should be protected from further unauthorized excavation. There are many ruins on the northern part of this reservation that have not been explored.

2. FLAGSTAFF DISTRICT.

The important group of ruins in Walnut Cañon are good types of cliff dwellings. These have received special attention from the Secretary of the Interior. The group of pueblo ruins which lie from 5 to 15 miles northwest of Black Falls have been examined and reported on by Doctor Fewkes. He pronounces them among the most important in the Southwest. They are entirely without protection.

3. HOLBROOK DISTRICT.

This is a region of numerous pueblo ruins, some of which have been examined and reported on by Doctors Fewkes and Hough. The Museum-Gates expedition of 1901, Doctor Hough's report of which
we now have, has advanced our knowledge of portions of this region very much. Doctor Hough has published particularly interesting information concerning the ruins in the petrified forest. The traffic in prehistoric wares from the Holbrook district has been deplorably active. Many thousands of pieces of excavated pottery have been shipped from Holbrook alone, and collections embracing several thousands of pieces are now in the hands of dealers at various towns in the district, and are offered for sale. These collections have been made, for the most part, by Indians and native Mexicans in the employ of traders, and are devoid of authentic records. The district is not rich in ruins that demand permanent protection, but it is in great need of temporary protection pending further serious investigation by competent parties.

4. Zuñi District.

This region is rich in both historic and prehistoric ruins. On Zuñi Reservation are the ruins of the historic Seven Cities of Cibola. El Morro, or Inscription Rock, is an interesting historic monument east of Zuñi, which is under temporary withdrawal by the General Land Office. The region south of Zuñi to Qumado is known to be full of ruins, and traders are securing large collections of pottery therefrom at the present time. The ruins of Zuñi have been thoroughly made known to us through the work of the Hemenway expedition, under the direction of the late Frank Hamilton Cushing, assisted by Mr. F. W. Hodge. The collections of this expedition are now in the Peabody Museum at Harvard University. Other important researches have been made in the Zuñi district by Doctor Fewkes.

IV. Gila Basin.

This is another region that embraces practically every species of prehistoric ruins. It is of vast extent and comprises, besides the valley of the Gila proper, the large valleys of the Salt and Verde rivers. As a seat of prehistoric culture it was one of the most extensive and populous. Many ruins of these three great valleys are on irrigible lands, and, accordingly, have disappeared with the advancement of agriculture.

1. Rio Verde District.

On the northern tributaries of the Rio Verde are many cliff ruins. Of these, Honanki and Palatki are the most important. They are within the limits of the San Francisco Mountains Forest Reserve. There are numerous cliff ruins along Oak Creek and Beaver Creek and their tributaries. Near Camp Verde is the ruin known as "Montezuma Castle," and a little farther up Beaver Creek, on the Black Mesa Forest Reserve, is the interesting Montezuma well. Mr. M indelev and Doctor Fewkes have made important studies and reports on the ruins of this district.

2. San Carlos District.

Of the ruins on this district we have very little information beyond that obtained by Mr. A. F. Bandelier, to whose indefatigable exploration we owe so much of our knowledge of the Southwest. Both pueblo and cliff ruins are known to exist in various parts of the district, almost all of which are situated within the limits of the San
Carlos Apache Reservation. Ruins are reported from near San Carlos, from various points along the upper Salt River; on White Mountain Creek, the Carrizzo, the Cibicu, and the Pinal.

3. LOWER GILA DISTRICT.

Many ruins of this district have disappeared during recent years because situated upon agricultural land. Our archaeological knowledge of the district is due, for the most part, to the Hemenway expedition under the late Mr. Cushing, to Mr. Mindeleff, and Doctor Fewkes. The famous Casa Grande ruin has, for several years, been under the care of the Government. The best collection from the district is that obtained by the Hemenway expedition. It is in the Peabody Museum at Harvard University.

4. MIDDLE GILA DISTRICT.

The ruins of this part of the Gila Valley are mostly on agricultural lands, though many cliff ruins are known to exist in outlying districts. Pueblo ruins are very plentiful about Solomonville, but are not well preserved. The largest is that of Pueblo Viejo. Ruins are also numerous about Clifton and along the Blue River. We have some reports on ruins of this district by Mr. Bandelier and Doctor Fewkes. There is need for further investigation and report as to the present condition of these ruins.

5. UPPER GILA DISTRICT.

It is known that there are many ruins on the upper Gila and its tributaries near Fort Bayard, the Mimbres, and near Silver City. They are almost entirely within the Gila Forest Reserve. These ruins should be officially investigated and reported on, as we have very meager information concerning them.

6. SAN FRANCISCO RIVER DISTRICT.

The upper San Francisco Valley and its tributaries, especially the Tularosa, is full of cliff and pueblo ruins. It is almost entirely within the Gila Forest Reserve. Much of it is almost unknown country. It is in great need of further exploration. While we know of its almost innumerable ruins, we have no reports on them. The most important archaeological work done here was that of Doctor Hough, of the National Museum, who made an expedition into this district during the past summer. Doctor Hough's report will doubtless give us much interesting information concerning the archaeology of this little known district.

LITERATURE.

With the generous assistance of Dr. Walter Hough I have prepared a brief bibliography relative to the ruins in these various districts, which is hereto appended. No attempt has been made to make this complete. Many valuable works are omitted. The purpose of it is to direct anyone seeking information on this subject to some literature thereon. Reference to this bibliography will enable anyone to secure considerable information concerning ruins or groups of ruins that have been examined and reported on.