

August 18, 1964

Mr. John P. Dey
195 Danforth Street
Rochester, New York 14611

Dear Mr. Dey:

We have very little information on Indians that inhabited Craters of the Moon. Prior to the coming of the white man, the southern half of Idaho was occupied by the Shoshoni Indians. The Bannock Indians, one of the Shoshoni Indian family groups, roamed the southern half of the state. Another family group, the Tukuarikas Tribe or "Sheepeaters", travelled through the headwaters of the Salmon River to the Boise basin on the west. A third group, the Lemhi Indians, were never a distinct tribe as such, but were mainly dissatisfied members of the Bannocks and Tukuarikas who banded loosely together.

It is evident that Indians travelled through Craters of the Moon, but it is not certain which groups they were. Several Indian trails existed in the Monument, however, as of 1955 they are no longer visible. Early pioneers reported that water holes were marked with piles of rock and sagebrush pointing in the direction of the hole, usually a short distance from the trail.

At Indian Tunnel, one of the lava tubes in the Monument, is a group of crescent shaped rock piles used as wind or firebreaks. Scattered about the area were various arrow points and obsidian chips.

Within Indian Tunnel and other caves, the remains of various animals have been found. Some of the bones were in association with charred wood, indicating old Indian campfires.

Occasionally, potsherds are found amid the crater wall fragments and the cinder slopes.

I recommend that you contact the Idaho Historical Society, 610 No. Julia Davis Drive, Boise, Idaho, for further information on the subject of Indian life of Southern Idaho.

William V. Appling

Craters of the Moon National Monument
Arco, Idaho 83213
December 18, 1964

BINDER COPY

(Archeology)

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Earl H. Swanson
Professor of Archeology
Idaho State University
Pocatello, Idaho

Dear Dr. Swanson:

We have been cataloging some of our Indian artifacts that have been accumulated over the years. Unfortunately, some of the items were turned in by visitors or employees during the early history of the Monument and very little data is known about individual items. If possible you may be able to help us identify the function of the various artifacts that we are sending you under separate cover.

Number 549 appears to be hatchet shaped; numbers 487 and 502 look like arrow straighteners or polishers; numbers 558 and 563 were found in the same location and look like a broken pestle?

We certainly would appreciate any assistance that you may be able to give. Thanks again for identifying the bison bones last summer.

Sincerely,

Edgar P. Menning
Chief Park Naturalist

Craters of the Moon
DATE 2/5/62
INFORMATION ☒ ACTION ☐
REGION FOUR OFFICE INITIALS G.F. Schumacher

"Stone Tipi Rings in North-Central Montana and the Adjacent Portion of Alberta, Canada: Their Historical Ethnological, and Archeological Aspects," by Thomas F. Kehoe, Anthropological Papers, No. 62, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 173, pp. 417-73; 8 figs., 14 pls., 7 tables, 1 map. Washington, 1960.

There has been much uncertainty regarding the origin and function of the so-called "tipi rings" which are present in large numbers in the northern Plains. While their ethnic origins remain obscure, there is historical evidence that they represent just what the name suggests: circles of stones used to anchor the cover of the conical skin lodge. This is supported by ethnographic accounts of the Blackfoot and other Plains peoples. During an intensive survey of the Blackfoot Reservation in 1952 and 1953, the arrangement of circles was noted at 210 sites. A number of camp patterns was evident, but there was no correlation between plan and physiographic setting. No eccentric rings were found, nor was there any other suggestion of ceremonial use. However, there seems to be a correlation between ring diameter and the depth to which the stones are depressed into the sod: size diminishes in proportion to depth, thus suggesting that the smaller rings are earlier, perhaps dating from the pre-horse period. In the past, excavation of tipi rings has produced few artifacts and little architectural information. As a consequence, only one ring was completely excavated although several others were tested. In all cases, the results indicate the domiciliary nature of the rings. In addition, the 1956 Blackfoot encampment at Browning, Montana, was mapped. The camp plan and the post-encampment remains closely parallel the archaeological evidence. Both resulted from an identical cause: the use of rocks for anchoring tipis. (WWC)



Craters of the Moon
National Monument
Type of visit ☒ 138
Adm. Asst. ☒
Maintenance Man ☒
Naturalist ☒