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Review of *Folsom: New Archaeological Investigations of
a Classic Paleoindian Bison Kill*. By David J. Meltzer.

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Denver Museum of Nature and Science

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Folsom: New Archaeological Investigations of a Classic Paleoindian Bison Kill. By David J. Meltzer. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. xiv + 374 pp. Maps, tables, figures, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$55.00 cloth.

In the opening chapter of this impressive study of “the site where, arguably, American archaeology in the early twentieth century was born,” David Meltzer familiarizes the reader with Folsom and its discovery in Colfax County, New Mexico, offering a brief introduction to the history of its early excavations and the important research questions his own work there investigated. In the next chapter he places the Folsom site in the historical context of the search for early humans in North America and elucidates its pivotal role in this search. Placing the site in its geographic and ecological setting is the burden of chapter 3, which includes sections on geology, hydrology, topography, climate, and modern flora. Then, in chapter 4, Meltzer discusses in detail the 1920s investigations, subsequent research from 1929-1996, and the 1997-1999 excavations and collections research of Southern Methodist University’s Quest Archaeological Research Program. Chapter 5 places the site in a geoarchaeological context and reviews present and past attempts at dating. Folsom’s Late Pleistocene climate and ecology are presented in chapter 6, while chapter 7 offers a faunal analysis and discusses the bison bonebed. The artifact assemblage is examined in chapter 8 along with a discussion of human mobility and technological organization deduced from the stone tools of Folsom’s Late Glacial hunter-gatherers. In his final chapter, Meltzer summarizes his work and offers his conclusions.

Five appendices supplement the text. Appendix A provides a brief synopsis of field procedures. The fascinating diary kept by Carl Schwachheim during his 1920s excavations is presented in appendix B. Appendix C describes the historical archaeology of the 1920s field camps of the Colorado Museum and the American Museum of Natural History; sediment analysis is the focus of the fourth appendix. The final appendix offers a historical account of the early attempts to define Folsom by the types of spear points found there and at the Lindenmeier site, and to separate Folsom from other point types.

Well written and well researched, *Folsom* is appropriate for both avocational and professional audiences as well as for general readers with an interest in archaeology. I was especially drawn to the historical aspects of the research and the analysis of old museum collections. The figures and tables are appropriate, and the artifact

illustrations in chapter 8 are of high quality. This excellent book should be in every major public library and in the personal library of everyone interested in Paleoindian studies, the early peopling of the Americas, and the history of archaeology. It is destined to become a classic. **Steven R. Holen**, *Curator of Archaeology, Denver Museum of Nature and Science*.