

February 1, 1986

Dear Dr. Krieger:

I have enjoyed your TimesPast column in the Telegram-Tribune and have noted your interest in the Dunites. For some time it has been my intention to write you, because Bert Schievink, the late "Hermit of the dunes" was my dear friend for ten years until the time of his death in 1974. On his deathbed I promised Bert that I would one day write of him. Toward that end, after his death I taped interviews with as many people as I could trace down about their relationship with him and any information they could give me about him. In my files are reams of transcripts of those interviews. And I did use Bert (or "Bouke", as I called him in the children's novel I wrote, THE SECRET OF THE DUNES) as a central character, drawing on real life events from his life. It occurs to me that your interest in the history of the area might naturally cause you to want even more complete information on Bert and I am writing to offer you accessibility to what I have if you should be interested.

I have a copy of Bert's will as I was one of those to which he left bequests. He had always encouraged me in my lifelong desire to write and I believe he intended me to use the money he left me toward helping me to that end. It provided the inspiration for me to do just that. He was a fascinating and charismatic man who exerted a strong impact on many lives. I have correspondence with many of his acquaintances and his family that would undoubtedly be of interest to anyone desiring a more detailed account of his life.

Although THE SECRET OF THE DUNES came close to being accepted by three major publishers, it has not yet been published. Because several Atascadero elementary teachers have read it and would like to have it to use in their own classrooms, I hope one day to be able to self-publish it. In the meanwhile, it does provide a very accurate picture of the way Bert interacted with people, the way he used language, and the heart of the man.

It is still my intention to write a book about Bert one day, but at the moment I am working with California Poets in the Schools and have personal responsibilities that defer the writing until a later date. But if you should have an interest in anything I've mentioned I would be glad to hear from you.

Thank you for making the history of our area live for all of us.

Sincerely,