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1969, Feb. 19

Mr. Guillermo Asunsolo Martinez,
Managing Editor, El "Heraldo",
Apartado Postal 60,
Ave. Universidad 2507
Chihuahua,
Chihuahua, Mexico.

Dear Sir:

I am most grateful for your very informative letter of Feb. 14th. You certainly need not apologize for your use of English, which is excellent. I am ashamed that I cannot write Spanish as well, but must confess my ignorance.

I am inclined to believe this was truly a meteorite, as they sometimes contain an iron sulphide called "troilite" which might look bronzy. But I have taken your suggestion and written Senor Jose Rocna at Hidalgo del Parral in an effort to get some samples.

I am quite interested in procuring any of this material I can, and if any more comes to your attention or into your possession and I could properly secure it, I would be glad to hear from you. I would not expect it free as I understand most finders are selling it, and I could afford to be liberal as I would save the expense and time of a trip down there.

I enclose a copy of the original newspaper report as generally printed in this region. I apologize for getting your name wrong and for addressing my first letter so poorly, but I was following the little information I had from this article. Your postoffice department did very well to deliver my first letter.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Monig

Blinding Fireball Crashes Into Earth

DN Sun 2-9-69

CHIHUAHUA, Mexico (UPI) — A blinding blue-white fireball, believed to be a meteor, turned night into day across Mexico and the Southwestern United States early Saturday then pounded to earth like a bomb.

"The light was so brilliant we could see an ant walking on the floor," said Guillermo Asunsolo, a Chihuahua newspaper editor.

"It was so bright we had to hide our eyes."

THE LIGHT FROM the fireball was sighted for at least 1,000 miles along a line stretching from Central Arizona deep into the superstition-ridden outlands of Northern Mexico.

"The people, especially the people in the small villages, are very alarmed," Asunsolo said. "They say this is an announcement that the world will soon end."

Asunsolo and other witnesses in the two countries indicated the suspected meteor thundered to earth in the almost impassable terrain of the Sierra Madre Mountains south of Chihuahua and north of Durango, Mexico.

"It was the brightest light since Halley's Comet in 1908," said Asunsolo, editor of the newspaper *El Heraldo*. He said he felt the impact when the fireball struck ground and was "quite scared."

"We ran up to the roof and saw a very big round ball moving from south to north," he said before the object crashed. "It was not red, but an intense blue-white."

Reports from such mountain towns as Parral, Santa Barbara de Oro and Valle Allende said the Mexican residents saw the fireball and felt it pound to earth. Asunsolo said the impact created "a tremendous tremor" that shook the ground for hun-

dreds of miles so hard that "some windows broke."

BUT DR. RONALD SCHORS, an astronomer with the Jet Propulsion Lab at Pasadena, Calif., who was visiting the McDonald Observatory at Fort Davis, Texas, said the fireball might have broken up and never landed. He said the tremors felt by residents might have been caused by a sonic boom created by the fireball streaking through the night sky.

"It was extremely bright," Schors said. "We had high clouds in the area but it burned right through. It was much brighter than Halley's Comet."

Schors said it was "several times brighter than a full moon."

A spokesman for the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory at Cambridge, Mass., said the fireball "most probably" was a meteor but "could possibly" have been a "polar orbiting satellite."

Dr. Charles Olivier of the American Meteorological Society said in Philadelphia the fireball had characteristics of both a meteor and a satellite. He said both a meteor and a burning satellite entering the earth's atmosphere have light brighter than the moon and can be seen over areas of 500 to 1,000 miles.

THE MEXICO CITY seismological station said its instruments did not register any tremor during the early morning hours, despite reports of sharp earth shocks from residents.

Reports from Parral, in the northern state of Chihuahua, said residents tumbled from their beds, thinking it was an earthquake.

Asunsolo said the area where the fireball apparently fell is barren, without roads and reachable only by helicopter.