

1969, Feb. 14

Dear Gene:

Happy Valentine Day!

I will make a copy of your clipping and return it; then I shall enclose a copy of a story the Dallas News carried. The Ft. Worth papers had the same but omitted the last several paragraphs.

I did nothing except write to the editor of the paper at Chihuahua City as I don't feel able to run off to Mexico, and suffer besides from an inability to speak Spanish as well as an antipathy to their food.

Anyway, Brian Mason and Harold Clarke of the Smithsonian were thru Dallas Tuesday evening the 11th on their way to El Paso, whence they were going (by rented car?) to Parral. Brian said he had had a report from Elbert King of NASA who was already down there that pieces were being picked up by the natives and sold in the streets for fancy prices. It is a chondrite with a black background, and Mason was hoping it would be a carbonaceous chondrite. I think it is quite possible; they do generally make a fearsome shock wave and light. (Of course some other types do likewise; e. g. Norton County.)

I felt at once it was no decaying satellite. It was far too vigorous for that, and pretty clearly coming in faster than escape velocity. I am sorry I wasn't able to get in on it, but it kind of a delicate question with me of just how much to buck Smithsonian. Had I started before then I would have felt no compunction.

There had been a fireball apparently ending just east of Houston Feb. 5 (3 a.m.?) and King and a confrere from NASA with Dieter Heymann of Rice and Armadillo Yramategui (sp?) of the Houston Planetarium were supposedly working on it, but I guess they had no success or at least dropped it like a hot potato when this Mexican windfall came along.

David Morley