

1969. May 5

Dr. Brian Mason,  
U. S. National Museum,  
Washington, D. C. 20560

Dear Brian:

Thanks for calling me when you and Roy were thru here on the way to Mexico. I had prior to then set in motion a little scheme to get some of these specimens, and it worked, so that I have a little suite of them--not like your prize specimens, but pretty good for our collection.

One gross feature of most of our pieces which impressed me is the great loss of crust, especially along the edges. I am assuming that this is caused mainly by handling, not only on the part of the finders but also by subsequent handlers, but the spalling seems greater than normal. Does your field experience lead you to think some of this or much of it came off when pieces were still in the air? Of course I realize some could break off on impact and some could have been deliberately detached by finders who want to see the inside--after all, they are just analyzing it in a cruder way than you do!

The reason I raise this point is that I noticed something of a similar phenomenon in some of the Kendleton, Texas, stones, a hard chondrite, that I collected all by myself just 30 years ago (May 2, 1939, as I recall). I was taken to the spot where several pieces had been picked up shortly afterwards, but we could never find any of the pieces of crust that had come off, and I am pretty sure my negro friends then finding them did not knock pieces off. There was a strong impression that some of these pieces had actually knocked against each other while still in the air. but this could hardly occur if a single piece burst--you would have to postulate multiple burstings of large pieces close to each other and about simultaneously.

I read your article about the identification of garnet in the Coorara meteorite some time ago, but noticed that two articles by your brother mineralogists disagreed somewhat. Brother McConnell was a little hard on you, finding you "impossible". Geller was more constructive in his search for what you done wrong, but both unstuffed your garnet pretty well! The intricacies of the arguments escape me, of course, but some day I'd like to know how it all comes out.

Now I see you are not at all discouraged, but proceed to find garnet in another meteorite, Allende, but I will ask you when next we meet why you had to confuse me and send me running to the books by using "grossular" instead of grossularite in the preliminary report I have just received, with many thanks.

Was King's preliminary report on cosmic ray induced activities reliable? I heard some unfavorable comment on it.

Sincerely,