

1963, June 16

Mr. Elvin R. Phipps,  
943 Lakeview,  
Emporia, Kansas.

Dear Mr. Phipps:

I had intended to write you again after my May 16th letter, but some 5 weeks ago got a case of the "shingles"--a virus infection of nerve ends, mine happening to be the "intercostal" type around the ribs. It hurts all the time and there seems to be no cure except time, so I've been pretty miserable and neglecting everything.

It is barely possible I shall go to see an eclipse of the sun in northern Manitoba on July 20, and if I take the Rock Island "Rocket" out of here I think it comes near you, possibly thru Topeka, Kan. of even Emporia. I've made this trip a couple of times but forget the exact route; it's the fast train from here to Minneapolis. I thought in that event I might be able to stop off to see you.

However, your kind willingness to deal by mail will probably obviate this, tho I still want to get finally a little history from you of the time and place and circumstances of the finding of these stones, with locality by sections or even quarter sections. Ameteorite is no better than its pedigree. I may have a little information along this line from Walter Houston in my files, but would like to have it directly from you.

I would be willing to send you my check in advance for the meteorite which I believe you said weighed 58½ pounds on the basis of the agreed \$3 a pound. Then I would like for you to box it well and ship it to me collect by Railway Express. It should be put into a box made of one inch lumber and securely nailed or strapped with steel banding. Maybe you could get some local shipper to do this job for you. I would willing to pay for it. These heavy high density stones are likely to be dropped and broken unless so packed; the older ones frequently have weathered veins running thru them which are points of weakness not too obvious.

If you cannot very readily do this, give me the outside dimensions of the stone and I can have a man here in our wholesale dry goods shipping room saw up the appropriate boards and send them to you parcel post so you could nail up the box. Your local express office might even have some of the steel strap banding machines which could be applied around the box.

As to the second supposed meteorite, there are two courses open. If you have a small chip about good fingernail size or could get one off it without shattering or marring the rock unduly--and this is sometimes not easy, because some of these old chondrites are pretty hard-- I could tell from inspection of the chip whether it is a meteorite, in all probability. Have you tried an Alnico magnet on the mass to whether there is a slight response? This is a good simple test, generally showing the presence of the usual 10% or so of metallic iron in the stone if it is a meteorite. The test is not entirely unambiguous as some terrestrial rocks contain enough of a magnetic oxide of iron to so respond. A chemical analysis is not necessary.

If you don't want to fool with testing, I would take a chance on paying the express down here on the second rock, tho you failed to fill in the blank you left for weight in your letter so that I still do not know what it weighs. I presume you think it is a meteorite because of its similarity to the first one in appearance, density, etc. I would agree if it is a meteorite to send you the \$3 a pound upon receipt and inspection. Otherwise I would have to send it back to you and I should you should stand the return express but I wouldn't fall out with you on this point. I can see you not want me to have the privilege of keeping it if I just said it wasn't a meteorite when you felt in your heart it was one. Of course there is no doubt as to Stone No. 1 because Mr. Houston identified it some time ago when he first told me about it.

I apologize for this long winded letter but if you will clear up the few points I have raised I feel we can proceed promptly. I will have the money available to pay you immediately.

Sincerely,