

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20560

April 2, 1969

AIRMAIL

Mr. Oscar E. Monnig
29 Chelsea Drive
Fort Worth, Texas 76134

Dear Oscar:

Thank you for your recent letter, which raises an interesting point. I remember our collecting the Bells fragment in the field with the aid of a magnet, and on this account I thought at the time that Bells was a Type I carbonaceous chondrite. When I had a chance to study it in the laboratory the density and presence of chondrules convinced me that it was Type II.

My statement "Type II carbonaceous chondrites are weakly or non-magnetic" therefore needs modification. Most of them are weakly or non-magnetic; Bells, Al Rais, and Essebi are exceptional in being quite strongly attracted by a magnet - I suspect this is due to a moderate content of magnetite. I don't think this is in any way the result of terrestrial weathering.

We are having a most interesting time with the new Mexican meteorite, which we are calling Allende. It contains small white or pink inclusions with a most unusual mineralogy - so far we have identified spinel, gehlenite, grossularite, and sodalite in them, the last two minerals being previously unknown in meteorites!

With warmest regards.

Sincerely,



Brian Mason
Chairman
Department of Mineral Sciences