

1979, Dec. 19

Dear Mr. Rathbun:

The Bells, Texas meteorites fell the night of Sep. 9, 1961 and it may be that your book gave the wrong year. By the way, give me the publisher of the book; I may want to buy a copy. However, my eyes are failing me so rapidly that I don't know if I will.

I barely missed witnessing this fireball as I had just come home from a store we then had in Waco, Texas, and had gone into my house when it occurred. I had phone calls immediately and rushed outdoors, but not in time to see any train, which I think was of short duration.

One of our group and a very close associate of mine for years, Mr. Robert Brown, was out in a car and saw the general illumination. It was the night of the Miss American contest on TV which made many people miss it. I don't know about general blackouts on TV but I did talk to one man very close to the fall who said his screen went blank for a few seconds.

Bells is a little town east of Sherman in Grayson County and our group worked on this for about four months. We retrieved what we reported as six small pieces, as I now recall offhand, but one turned out to be a mistake. Only one was fresh and all the rest got rained on when Hurricane Carla came directly over the fall area a few days later. This would not hurt an ordinary chondrite, but there were carbonaceous chondrites and water is nearly fatal to them as they contain soluble constituents.

WE had recovered a carbonaceous chondrite in Oklahoma at Crescent in 1936 and it was a thrill to repeat the retrieval of another of these very rare falls, but frustrating in that we never could find much material.

Merry Christmas, and forgive my enthusiastic recalling of past prowess!

Sincerely,