

1966, March 7

Dear Dr. Henderson:

I thank you greatly for the long delayed letter of Feb. 7th finally concluded and mailed to me March 3. I have a similar one in the works to you started in January about the West Texas stones and still hope to get it off to you some day.

I do genuinely thank you for your work in keeping me informed about the Tishomingo irons, and your efforts to educate me accordingly, all of which I absorb to the very best of my ability. I really count it a privilege to have the country's top scientists working to tell me things--and I mean it! I got the reprint on the Freda iron and went over it carefully; I can thoroughly appreciate what you said about the normal presence of phosphide inclusions in irons of this sort.

The letter from Buchheit of Batelle was intriguing in that he apparently at once recognized the structure as novel in several respects. There is a hint here that Dr. Goldstein might be wrong in his idea that he could reproduce this artificially, since it apparently does not exactly match man-made alloys.

I believe you once spoke over the phone of there being some indication of relatively rapid cooling (because of lack of separation into phases?) and yet you say the low or absent Al<sub>26</sub> might indicate heavy shielding which implies a relatively large mass. These two thoughts seem a bit inconsistent to me; a very big mass should ordinarily cool rather slowly. Of course when you got into actual numerical computations I can see both approaches might be shown to be consistent. Ben Franklin once said you could prove anything by logic, and I sometimes think the writers on meteorites show a great flair in that direction.

Anyhow, the whole affair reminds me of an occasion when my wife once stated some rather bold and foolish conclusions on a matter scientific in front of the late Dr. Frederick Leonard, who was, if nothing else, a great stickler for correctness in all things. He remonstrated with her that she had ignored certain intermediate objections, and she replied, "Dr. Leonard, my mind is not cluttered up with all those details. I can just go right thru to the point." Well, in this case, I didn't know about the martensitic figures or the absence of phosphides or the low Al<sub>26</sub> readings. I just know how these things had been found and what they looked like, and I could go directly to the conclusion that they were meteorites!



Any way, you have raised some doubts in my mind about the infallibility of your pronouncement that a sample I showed you about two years ago up there was not a meteorite. Do you recall the piece you had polished, which showed acicular structure under the microscope?--sudden cooling, no phases, hence no meteorite. I had got it from a man near Llano, Texas, I think, and you seemed already to know about it. Apparently the finder had been sending it all over the country trying to prove it was a meteorite, and getting all negative answers. But on that same trip I took a piece by Brian Mason, then in New York, and he checked it for nickel. He didn't pay much attention the precipitates by dimethylgloxime but I thought I saw a trace of nickel--small, indeed, but typical. This was in a stony matrix.

I am going to be down that way in a week on some company business and hope to see this man and learn more on the ground of where he is finding this material--he claims there is a good deal of it scattered thru an area, but is a bit secretive about the matter. I think it is worth a bit more investigation, at least.

I cannot go to Tishomingo for at least two weeks, and am trusting that you will not let any one interfere with me. I do want the  $5\frac{1}{2}$  pound piece back to return before I go up there; I must show my good faith. Right at present the boy who found it is in the hospital recovering from an appendectomy, but I have alerted him and his father to my approaching visit and told them I am now quite serious about discussing acquisition.

Yours sincerely,