

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

December 20, 1966

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

Dear Mr. Monnig:

It seems that I have a built in device for getting into difficulties. During the scramble to complete our exhibition hall and have it open for the distinguished visitors, it was necessary to prepare samples, write labels, number the specimens and in that rush I went overboard on the Tishomingo iron.

You informed me about your contract with the owner of the iron and that you were going to visit him and acquire it. Not knowing that he proved so difficult to work with, I incorrectly assumed that by the time I wrote you, you would be the proud owner of 600 pounds of "treasure" and with so much in your possession you would let us have the small piece for the National Collection.

Therefore, I accessioned it as a gift and thereby opened the door for you to get a worthwhile tax deduction. Surely a tax deduction has some appeal.

Oscar this Tishomingo iron is scientifically most important, it is more so than the average iron meteorite so we would like to display it. It now has a rather important place in the exhibition case, its label states that it is from the Oscar Monnig collection. However, since the accession has been retracted we must change the label and I hope you will let us relabel it as "Loaned by Mr. Oscar Monnig". I know that you have let Museums in Fort Worth display things and I hope you will give us the honor of displaying this specimen of yours. If you have any particular desire about the label I will be happy to prepare it as you want it. We ask you as a favor to the Smithsonian, please do not make us redo the case. If we take out the specimen and the picture we will have holes in the background of the case and that means the case has to be cleaned out and redone.

Have you given any thought to revisiting the locality and making another offer to acquire the main mass. It is so important that I suggest that you let us cooperate with you and with the aid of our detector, we might uncover some additional pieces. Since the public has been told about this meteorite, I fear that somebody will go into the area and do what they can to get it.

We have put in a lot of work on that meteorite and would not like to see someone else move in and capture the prize.

With kindest regards and best wishes for the holidays, I remain,

Cordially yours,

Ed.

E. P. Henderson
Research Associate
Division of Meteorites