

1965, Nov. 29

Dr. E. P. Henderson,
U. S. National Museum,
Washington, D. C. 20560

Dear Dr. Henderson:

The finder of the Tishomingo irons is like our friend at Harleton--he has no phone. Therefore the best I could do was to write him and explain the situation very much as you did to me.

I requested that he send me the 6 pound piece for forwarding on to you, and asked permission to cut it and use some of it for destructive analysis. I explained your doubts. I did say most of the piece could be returned to him, probably in two portions.

I invited him, if he had any misgivings or reluctance, to phone me collect, but he has not yet done so. If he balks and I have to go up there, it would be better if I had a letter from you stating what you told me over the phone and expressing the desirability of having another piece for study and work.

I will look thru my files and try to send you a few pictures showing the main masses. I know that can't tell you much, but they certainly look like meteorites. These are original color slides and I would appreciate having them returned.

I did not actually see the little pieces taken out of the same hole in which the two larger pieces were found, but was told they were found therein after my first visit, when I urged that further digging be done. The find was in a pasture of granitic soil, an eastward extension of the Arbuckle Mountains.

When Glenn Huss wrote me about etching the small piece you have, he said the dark color was not due to over-etching. "Both pieces were etched once then re-polished and re-etched to obtain as little darkness as possible. The scratches which appear on the surface are from the etching brush, which is really quite soft,

and indicate the softness of the metal as the surfaces were polished for micro-etching and showed no marks before etching. The bright spots in the surface are evidently due to a difference in composition. They were visible on the pre-etched surfaces in a manner similar to water spots on the blade of a table knife." I would appreciate your comments on these remarks and some indication whether your experience and interpretations are similar.

I think my latest definition of a meteorite is being greatly reinforced: a meteorite is one which the authorities will accept as such. It is going to be very interesting to see what the experts finally say about this! If they conclude it is not a meteorite, I will have the great fun of having a letter in my files (quite confidential, of course) from a man who ought to know, saying that it is!

No hurry about returning the little piece or what is left of it. I will keep you informed of developments.

Sincerely,