

1968, July 2.

Mr. C. P. Butler,
738 Sequoia Ave.,
San Mateo, Calif.

Dear Mr. Butler:

Tentatively I shall be on vacation in California in the latter part of July and probably in San Francisco July 29-31. I would like to visit with you if conditions are favorable.

I have long intended to ask whether you are familiar with Contributions from the Lick Observatory, No. 5. This is in part a ready made survey of a fireball of July 27, 1894, and was always very intriguing to me. Inspired by it and in the ignorance of my earlier years of efforts on meteorites, I visited an acquaintance at Madera once and we made a one day tour of the region we picked out as the most likely one for meteorites. The country was moderately favorable and the people mildly receptive but of course one does almost nothing in part of a single day.

I have since felt more and more, especially considering the gorgeous smoke clouds left, that this was a friable meteorite, maybe a carbonaceous chondrite but certainly one of the crumblier types, and that hunting for it at this late date was utterly hopeless. But there are some records of hard stones leaving dust clouds and I would say there is some chance of something being yet recoverable.

One thing that has intrigued me is the unusually fine set of sight-sound intervals and the attempt to calculate the distance to the path with them. I have often thought of writing Whipple to see if some of his students could take more modern data on the upper atmosphere and things above it to about 30 miles and recompute this to advantage. I take it you would still not have the distance to the final point but merely a normal to the path.

The gloomy conclusion is reached that altho there was an end height of about 6 miles (very good for meteorites) "It is not possible to fix the place where they fell. They are probably confined to a roughly circular area having A for the center, and ten or twelve miles in diameter. It is likely that the fragments which reached the earth were small, and comparatively few in number, It does not seem likely that a search for them would be regarded."

Here's a chance to go on a meteorite hunt 71 years later!