1961, July 25

Mr. J. B. Brannan,
Box 1126,
Breckenridge, Texas.

Dear Sir:

I read with interest your letter to the Star-Telegram and have no doubt that the meteor you saw was one from which the Harleton, Texas, stony meteorite of some 18½ pounds fell the night of May 30, 1961 at 10.25 p.m.

I have interviewed people "on the spot" who witnessed that same meteor from here, from Tyler and from two points right by the place of fall. All of these report that it definitely "went out", that is, ceased to be a luminous body, before it apparently reached the earth.

From your distance, I am quite sure you are right that the object did seem to come to the ground, but that is only because of the curvature of the earth and the so-called 'dip of the horizon".

I have not tried to compute the exact heightof this meteor when it was extinguished, because the observations I have measured are only approximate, but I am sure it was several miles and probably in the range of 5 to 10. That path of the path was below the horizon for you.

The meteorite does retain some warmth when it hits, and Mr. Craver, who dug it out of the sand with his bare hands about 30 minutes later, said it was still somewhat warm then. But there is no case on record of one being too hot to handle ~~o~~tho that might be true in thecase of a freshly fallen iron, of which we have very few reports.

Yours sincerely,

More on Meteors

I have read with interest the articles that you have had in regard to the meteorite that apparently fell in the vicinity of Marshall on the night of May 30.

With my brother-in-law, Preston E. Wiles, 3971 Valentine St., Fort Worth, I was driving on U. S. Highway 180 about seven miles east of Breckenridge. We had just turned on a long, straight stretch of the highway that bears due east and at this point the horizon was approximately seven miles. We saw the meteorite approaching the horizon at an angle of approximately 60 to 75 degrees measured from the horizon and it was still a flaming ball of fire as it disappeared over the horizon directly down the highway in front of us. In other words, it was due east from our location when it disappeared.

One of your articles expressed doubts as to whether the meteorite could still be hot, as Astronomer Oscar Monnig had said that he knew of no meteorite on record which was hot when it hit. I am not trying to say whether or not the object mentioned in this article is a meteorite, but I believe that this meteorite that was observed and apparently fell on that night could have been a meteorite that was flaming hot when it hit the earth.

According to my calculations, the distance to Marshall from my vantage point is about 270 miles and the meteorite was only a few miles high when it went behind the horizon and passed from our view. The meteorite was visible until it disappeared behind the horizon, so I am convinced that it hit the earth and that it was still hot for a period of time after it hit. As to whether it has actually been found, I do not know.

J. B. BRANNAN.
Box 1126, Breckenridge.