SMITHSONIAN NAMES IT 'HARLETON'

6 Labs in U. S., Russia Testing Meteorite

Harleton, the northwest Harrison County town named in honor of its founder, now has passed the name to a second major discovery in that area.

"Harleton Meteorite" is the name given by Smithsonian Institute to the 18½-pound chunk that fell from the heavens the night of May 30 in the back yard of the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Craver of Harleton.

Earlier, a major gas field was named in honor of the Harleton community.

The Harleton Meteorite, after being cut in half, and one of the halves broken into smaller pieces, this week is being tested in six major U.S. laboratories and in Russia.

Scientists at Smithsonian Institute, in Washington, hail recovery of the meteorite as being in a "virtually uncontaminated" state, according to news reports to Marshall News Messenger from the nation's capital.

E. P. Henderson, associate curator of the Smithsonian Institute, who came here June 12 to negotiate for acquiring the meteorite, told a Washington news conference that all other recoveries of meteorites have been [illegible] testing and analyzing. The earth's atmosphere, he explained, had broken down elements within previously recovered meteorites. It was because of this the institute was so anxious to obtain the Harleton find as quickly as possible, expressing some regret that it had not been obtained immediately after its recovery.

Harleton was named, in 1891 for its founder, J. W. Harle, a sawmill operator who built a tram railroad from Marshall to move timber from his mill.

The name became prominent on the Texas oil and gas map when D. E. and R. J. Whelan of Marshall brought in a gas discovery well to open up what became known as the Harleton field.

Now, with the meteorite being named in honor of the community, Mr. Harle's name is being extended to identify the community he founded for a second time.

The meteorite was heard to strike the ground almost simultaneously with a blaze through the sky, which gave an appearance of a white, then red flash before turning black. Louis Craver and a friend, Henry Smith, who heard the fall, quickly found the small crater with aid of a flashlight and by midnight it had been dug out of the ground.

Immediately, Oscar Monning of Ft. Worth, representing Smithsonian, rushed to Marshall to identify the discovery and sought to obtain the find. Unable to deal with Mr. Craver, he notified Smithsonian and it was then that Mr. Henderson made plans to come here.

The adage of pennies from heaven came true for the Cravers. Their alertness in unearthing the meteorite—plus their luck in hearing it fall in their yard—paid rather handsome dividends. They received approximately $4,000 for their trouble it is indicated in the report from Washington.

Previous meteorite finds had deteriorated to such an extent that their testing by scientists provided little or no information about their origination or flight, Mr. Henderson explained.

"The fast recovery and careful handling of the rock will enable meteorologists to study the rock while it is still free from terrestial contamination.

"Usually, people try to do foolish tricks with meteorites—they pour acid on them, heat them or try to crack them open.

"Within 20 hours of the time it fell Oscar Monning sought to acquire the meteorite for us," Mr. Henderson explained, adding that meteorite tests and measurements have to be made within 30 days to obtain accurate information.

"After 30 days, the elements deteriorate and their evaluation would give us distorted information."

The meteorite was cut in half last week, and American and Russian meteor experts this week began testing portions of the Harleton find, described as the first known to have fallen in the United States since October, 1959.

Chunks of half of the meteorite are to be sent to six laboratories across the country and to Russia, for testing.

The laboratories in this country include Brookhaven, in Long Island, New York; Astrophysical in Cambridge, Mass.; the Carnegie Institute, in Pittsburgh; the University of Southern California; the University of Chicago; and the University of Kentucky.

The Smithsonian's Building of Natural History is to retain the second half of the meteorite, which Mr. Henderson measured, before it was halved, to be nine inches long, and six inches in width and breadth. He said the rock contains some nickel iron and iron sulfites, and has a black cr[illegible]. When measured in Marshall, its la[illegible] circumference was 23¾ inches.

Did you get this?

Mrs Satterwhite