More Meteorites Said Likely in Harleton Area

Amateur Expert Here to Negotiate For Object to Assist in Studies

By CLYDE FOSTER

Residents of the Harleton area were urged Thursday to keep on the lookout for additional portions of the meteorite which fell on a farm in that area Tuesday night.

Oscar E. Monning, Fort Worth department store executive who has been interested in meteorites since 1926, was in Marshall Thursday attempting to negotiate for the meteorite to be sent to Smithsonian Astrophysical Laboratory at Cambridge, Mass., for study.

"The meteorites found in the past have almost always been in more than a single piece," Mr. Monnig said. "And there are strong indications that there are additional fragments of varying size in the Harleton area at this time."

VALUE LIMITED

Scientific value of the meteorites is almost entirely limited to those found within a few days of the time they fall, he said. The recovery of the one Tuesday night was one of the earliest in recent years.

The meteor found here was the first in East Texas since one was located in Plantersville in 1930, Mr. Monnig said. There have been no reported recoveries of meteorites in this section of the state for old meteorites since the appearance of one changes within a relatively short time to match the appearance of native East Texas iron ore rocks, Mr. Monnig said.

"There have been hundreds of old meteorites found in Texas, but all of them have come from areas where native rocks are either limestone or virtually none-existent," he pointed out.

NOT UNUSUAL

The meteorite which fell in the

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rear of the J. W. Craver home near Harleton was termed of average size and apparently is one of the stone meteorites, which are about 20 times as frequent as iron meteorites.

To date, there has never been an early recovery of an iron meteorite in the United States, although most of these found do contain a certain amount of free iron, Mr. Monnig said.

Mr. Monnig said the simplest single test to determine whether a rock is a meteorite is to check it beneath the surface for free iron, since rocks in the earth crust contain iron only in the form of oxides.

NEW STUDIES

"The meteorites apparently come from a body where there is a deficiency of oxygen, since the iron has not been oxidized as it would on earth," he said. "That is the reason meteorites are hard to detect in this area, since the iron changes the color to brown within a relatively short time."

The amateur meteorite expert said scientific value of fresh meteorites has increased greatly in the past 10 years with the development of new techniques.

"Ten years ago the research was limited to some rather elaborate chemical observations," Mr. Monnig said. "But in the past 10 years new methods of checking the rocks for various reactions and other information have been developed."

EXPLAINS SOUND

Mr. Monnig described the "explosions" reported heard over a wide area shortly before the meteorite landed as shock waves set up as the meteorite roared through the atmosphere.

The sound was limited to a cone-shaped area behind the point of impact, while persons in front of the impact area may have heard the whistle of the trajectory as it neared the earth.

He discounted reports of another meteorite falling east of Marshall Wednesday night, pointing out that it is not unusual for such reports to follow the recovery of a meteorite.

"People become more interested in such recoveries and have a tendency to report minor fireballs which are consumed long before they reach the earth," he said.