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1973 January 30

Mr. Curtis Tunnell,  
Historical Survey Commission,  
Box 12276, Capital Station,  
111 East 19th St. (Laboratory)  
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Sir:

I appreciated your talking to me about the meteorite in the effects of Prof. J. E. Hawkins. He taught German at Baylor University at Waco until his retirement in 1964. He died in 1969. His widow still lives near the campus.

It seems that Hawkins was an inveterate searcher for Indian artifacts as an avocation for many years of his life. I assume he made these field trips as a sort of outdoor exercise. At any rate he had acquired a collection of sorts and Mrs. Hawkins phoned Dr. Bronaugh of the geology department at Baylor suggesting that he come look at the material to see if Baylor wanted any of it for their departmental work or display in their museum.

Bronaugh had formerly been with the University of Texas and while there had identified a stony meteorite from West Texas. It also happened that I had been at Baylor a short time before, last fall, and made a talk on meteorites to a geology class there, at which time I met Bronaugh and told him of my interest in meteorites.

When he went to Mrs. Hawkins' home he soon saw a stony meteorite which he recognized as such immediately. When he questioned her about it he found she knew nothing at all of where or when or how her husband had acquired it. Bronaugh told me of the object and send me some photographs of it, so I subsequently called on Mrs. Hawkins.

She told me that neither she nor her daughter living with her nor her son, DR. J. E. Hawkins of Flint, Mich., knew anything about the object. There is a son, Richard, living in California, but they seem to think it hopeless for me to contact him.



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I was referred to a Mr. Reginald A. Smith, the husband of the late Dr. J. E. Hawkins' sister. He operated a drug store at Turkey, Texas, for some years, and Hawkins apparently visited this brother-in-law frequently. Smith was at Turkey 1945-51 and said he did know about the meteorite but did not know where Hawkins found (or got?) it. Later he told me that you were from Turkey and were quite familiar with findings in that area; he was the one who suggested I contact you.

Meanwhile I checked with a sister of Hawkins, a Mrs. L. D. McMinn of Cleburne, Tex., who recalled that Hawkins made many trips over Texas and New Mexico searching for Indian artifacts. She referred me to her son, a Dr. T. D. McMinn, Jr., of St. Louis, who went with him on some of these trips. He could say only that it was not found on any of the outings when he was along, and thought that pretty well ruled out West Texas and New Mexico as possible sources. He said his uncle had been very active in the Central Texas region, and suspected that if he found it himself it came from that region. "Also, he received many contributions from his students and it may have come into his possession by this route."

Smith referred me also to a nephew, Ray Sanderson, of Belen, New Mexico. He vaguely recalled that Hawkins mentioned the rock several years ago when visiting in Belen but had no recollection of where it came from.

Mrs. Hawkins also suggested I contact a Wm. D. Bain, whom I found in Houston. He had accompanied Dr. Hawkins on many of his field trips or searches, tho he says he was 50 years younger. He seemed to know that Hawkins had found one, but knew nothing more. He said Hawkins was pretty much of a "loner" in his searches, which were done mainly for relaxation and outings, and kept no systematic notes, and that he generally told no one much about his finds as to localities.

I know I have bored you but I gave every possible detail in hopes that something would strike a chord with you. I enclose a slide which you may return if you don't want it, or keep if you please. The stone is somewhat more brownish than this shows, but it is a very well preserved stony meteorite with nice "thumb-marks".

Sincerely,