

KIMBLE COUNTY (1917, Oct. 1?) METEORITE

Trip of 1938, June 9-12

At Leander N. L. Craven, postmaster, stated that he and a party were on the way to Junction to pick pecans and were camped between Mason and London a few miles out of Mason; they were asleep and woke just in time to see it disappear; he was not certain of his directions. It "sounded like a dozen Boche planes going over"; the noise was a "knocking" louder than a plane but not like thunder. London people were very frightened. _____
Faubion now at the Red & White store in Leander was in the party, also O. B. Evans. The latter said there was a low rumbling noise like thunder and reports like machine gun fire or rifles--"rapid". It was overhead and going north or NE, he thought, and he claimed to have seen the ball of fire and the smoke left. "They claimed it traveled from San Antonio to Hillsboro."

At Liberty Hill, we found that Earl Bryson had seen it from the top of a windmill E of town, but he is now very ill (paralyzed) in Austin; formerly worked there at Federal Bakery. E. S. Johnson here heard the noise and thought it was coming from the S or SW.

C. E. Miller, now of Kerrville, was then bt. K and the Live Oak Ranch, near Mt. Home, and saw the fireball from a car; he thought it was towards Fredericksburg. It was NE of him. He claims to have first heard a "racket". R. H. Linn, then a boy, was 20 miles SW of Rock Springs and thought it started in the S and went to the N. It was towards Rock Springs. Many such people were indoors and judged by sounds or got outdoors too late to see the fireball in flight. We met these men at the home of Reginald Morris' father, between Morris Ranch and ~~XX~~ Tivydale. At or near Tivydale, Mr. Fritz recalled the event but vaguely. Mr. Ernst at the Pedernales Crossing 4 miles S of Harper recalled the event but could give no details.

Jim Buckelew about $\frac{1}{2}$ mi N of Fredericksburg on the Llano road hauled the meteorite for Strain; he placed Vester Parker's place 7 miles W of Harper, and suggested we go out 5 miles and ask. At this house, where there is a large tree in the middle of the road, we were directed to the first house on the right about a mile or $\frac{3}{4}$ farther on, which is a new place Parker is in.

(Albert Syl) Vester Parker has lived on this farm or ranch or adjoining property since a boy and was very familiar with it. He said there was formerly a fence along the hillside on which he found the meteorite, and that during his boyhood the land was very open (less cedars, etc.) and he traveled it a great deal, riding the fences. He is sure in particular that he herded ~~XX~~ sheep on this portion of the land for 3 years as a boy, and he had never noticed any large rock of the sort at this locality. One day in the early spring of 1918, probably Mar. or April, say about 6 months after the 1917 fall, he was driving some horses

along this region when he noticed what looked like a 15 gallon black wash pot turned bottom side up and lying some 100 feet from him. He had to continue after the horses at the time, and tho he returned shortly or "later", he could not then locate it. He seems to have come back first perhaps a week later, again 6 months later, and 15 or 20 times in all before he found it some 5 years later, when it looked brown like an old oil drum in his yard at the time we were talking to him. He had always been searching too far to the east, it seems.

The piece was lying with the flat side down, this portion being not over 3 inches in the dirt. He recalls no signs of any marks on the ground or in the vegetation, and in fact never mentioned this phase of the subject. He observed that one part which seems to have bulged out relatively was cracked, and he seems to have taken a ~~crowbar~~ crowbar and turned the rock over, rolling it perhaps 2 to 3 feet downhill and then knocked off the projecting piece. The inside was a marked (dark?) gray. He did n't know what it was till finally a boy of about 25, a young hunter just there for the day from Aransas Pass some 10 to 12 years ago, saw it and told him it was a meteorite. This man was a "long, tall, then " fellow, and the first man Parker showed the rock to. He gave him some of the "shivers" off the rock. Ray Bierce, Parker's brother in law, also has some of the fragments, and Parker later took C. R. Price, his wife's uncle and an ex-miner, to view the rock.

The point of find is on the side of a hill on the east prong of the James River, locally known as the "Little Devil's River". The hill is a large, relatively flat one, and the rock lay on the gentler slope near the top, but not down far enough to be on the steep slopes. The harder and more continuous rock layers are above it, some 15 to 25 feet away at the closest, and it was in a region partly filled by washed soil and pretty well concealed now by cedars. Parker at the time lived 2 to 2½ miles E of the point. The rock was on the north side of the hill.

Capt. L. Gean (Jean?) Shield (S?) of the National Guard unit at Coleman, residence at Santa Anna, was apparently in charge of the Mineral Resource Survey of the county but got Strain there to do the work on the elephant bones dug up and while Strain was temporarily in charge he seems to have heard the meteorite from several sources, perhaps for one thru J. F. ~~Wax~~ Wedekind of Harper, who had known Strain's father. Wedekind has two pieces of the meteorite which Strain let him keep, the larger weighing perhaps 3 or 4 oz. Parker claims to have signed "4 or 5 pages" giving the U of T the "35" (42?) pound shiver, and claims they came on his place without permission on a Sunday morning or a day when he was moving and hauled the main piece away. He and Wedekind are very hostile towards Strain and the University and Prof. Enderly of Fredericksburg, whom Parker thought (others confirmed) had done

J. F. Wedekind was in an electrically lighted outdoor camp at Kerrville with another man; he thought he heard the noise first and his impressions were of a great flash of light which did not last long and disappeared towards Harper, or last seen in that direction ("wouldn't miss it far"). He claims to have first taken Strain to the point of find.

H. B. Roberts had just come in from the ranch, and was getting out of the car at the gate of his house when he saw the light, which he places first; he gave begin. S. 48 # E, alt 41½, end N 28 W alt 5. The end he placed just over the back cross on a church which he said was there at the time. It was "minutes" (perh. 1?) till the noise. This ought to be one of the best observations.

W. A. Brown was about 12 mi. NW of Harper in Kimble County, due N of Vester Parker's about 2 miles, and said in town that the path lay all to the east of him, with end due N. ----- Tobin, 4 miles to the E of him, said the path lay to the W of him (hearsay). He and his brother E. R. Brown were in a tent on the ranch and the brother is there now; go out old London road (second lane off to the north after going out of town on the W), cross 4 cattle guards, then take newly graded road to the left 1½ mi. The end of the trail was low. I think he saw the train only, and he was the only person who mentioned anything that might be called train drift: he said the smoke drifted to the SE, but he may have meant that it extended to the SW SE. Most people spoke merely of the train gradually spreading or widening and fading out. It seems to have looked somewhat like the Milky Way in the this region. Brown said that Enderly's work had placed the point of fall near the west end of Steamboat Mountain ("Cedar Springs" is there, where the James and Little Devil's Rivers run together).

Leslie Harper lived ½ mi. SE of Harper (down road we came in on ½ mi.) and was sitting on the edge of the bed, having just come in; he managed to get outdoors in 10 or 15 seconds and still saw the fireball itself almost as bright as the sun in the SE; it moved E of his zenith and ended in the NW. He watched the train and then as he started to go in heard the noise--one big explosion and a rumbling. At the spot he gave begin S 23 E, alt 29; end N 37 W, alt 14. The Brunton was set thruout this trip at 10° E. dec. Harper was sure there was no train drift, just a fading away, and est. sight-sound interval (or time he was outdoors before sound?) at 1 min.

Gilbert Pape (pronounced with braad a and e sounded) was 15 to 18 miles N of Harper and saw it, and now lives at Harper, but we did not interview him.

Sam E. Ezell said the light was so bright he threw a quilt over his eyes; it went almost right over ~~xx~~ him and ended in the NW,

in fact he thought more W than N. Mrs. Ezell was 10-12 mi. SW of there at the time and heard the noise but not loudly; she saw only general illumination. Ezell was with J. J. Rogers (filling station man), and they were about 9 mi. slightly W of N from Harper, at a point $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ mi. inside the Gillespie County line, between the 7 and 8 miles marker (markers apparently start at SE corner of Kimble County). They were on the N side of a shed, and he had been asleep; he was under the impression that the light woke him, and he saw the fireball in flight. He thought he heard the noise later, but some hogs near them began running towards the men and the stock in general began "cutting up" so much that his mind was directed more to them than anything else. He felt sure the endpoint was mostly N of him, somewhat W of N, and from the spot gave a beginning azimuth pointing towards Parker's place, N 59 W alt 32; end az. N 36 W alt 11. Note this would place path west of his zenith which does not at all agree with most of the Harper observations. He was very positive Parker's rock could not be the one unless it went off from the main path at a sharp angle, and this prejudice was shared by most Harper citizens. The beginning was placed and apparently limited by some trees rather than the shed top.

J. A. Milam at the Noxville Postoffice, which is $4\frac{1}{2}$ mi W of Noxville on the map, rushed out of a NE door in time to see the light disappearing in the NW and as it disappeared there was a great noise like thunder only worse; it shook the house and the windows. He thought the object had surely fallen at Whitworth's ranch and so smacked at the time, which should make end az. relatively good. He pointed from the same spot to beginning S 14 E, practically horizon, to end N 30 W altitude 6; for the beginning he was going by "the path of white smoke left in the sky like the Milk Maid's Path--white smoke going all the way across". Note his path goes slightly west of zenith. He said a freighter camped out in front saw it all, and said the meteor seemed to come from the moon but then turned and went north. Mrs. J. F. Parker had mentioned this party who saw it come from towards the moon the day before. Mrs. Milam said the "smoke went on and on", and was openly cynical about Vester's claims that his rock came from the meteor. Here we heard that Bryan Cobb saw the meteor well, having been outdoors on horseback; he was then in the vicinity of Noxville, but now lives near Mountain Home, 3 or 4 miles west of there on the Rock Springs Road. Mrs. Milam also spoke of the smoke as being "straight up" and was positive from the sound that the meteorite went NW of them.

At Segovia Mr. _____ Curtis stated that he was 16 to 18 miles from there on the N Llano at the time; he and his wife recalled the entire phone line getting alive right after the event and they referred us to Mrs. Kindrick, widow of the phone operator and exchange owner at Junction. Mr. Durst, father of the present sheriff at Junction, had seen it completely, but is now dead. Mrs. Louis Dunbar about 12 miles out on the N Llano road probably saw it. Mrs. E. E. Bolt on the road up towards Menard, near the mouth of Bear Creek, perhaps saw it. Just west of Segovia, following the old Junction road, we inquired at the Northcutt house (Marshall's?) and were told the meteor was clearly east of them, going from NW to SE (sound reversal?). They referred us to G. W.

Vierling at the pipe line company place a few miles farther on, but he recalled nothing definite; they thought he had seen it all, but he apparently did not. At the Northcutt house, Mr. Bannosky referred us to his father at Cleo. The party at the thrasher where we found Vierling referred us to Jack Ake at London (town clown?). Here in my notes is also a reference to J. M. Bishop who was 18 or 19 miles towards Menard from Junction about 4 miles off the road, who saw the light to the East and heard no noise. He must have been one of the men there, and I think was from a house just across the way (south side of old road to Junction) where some Bishop's lived. We were also told to go back towards Segovia and see a Franz family, but did not do so.

At Junction Lane Hodges said he was $\frac{1}{2}$ way to Sonora near the Black Ranch, and can recall the spot well (near a certain gate); he was in a wagon and saw the ball of light go thru the sky, but heard no noise afterwards. The ball of fire went out while still in the sky and ended nearly due east, tho I perhaps influenced him to say to the left of a line to Junction. "Dashed" pieces came off (bursts of flame dropped downwards?). Some one here again mentioned E. O. Dunbar (see above) as being 14 miles out on Sonora road.

N. C. Patterson, jeweler, got outdoors in time to see smoke ending in the NE, and referred us to C. W. Atchison. R. B. Gibbs whom we met in Junction was camped in a creek bed k just S of Mason on the Llaño road, and said the end of the smoke was in the S, and that the meteor began in the NE; he heard a rumbling and must be influenced by sound reversal. J. A. McCollum said the noise was heard at London; he was 3 miles W of there and reported the smoke was S and a little E. Jack Ivy at London is said to have seen it all.

Mrs. S. B. Kindrick at Junction said they generally closed the exchange at 10 p.m., and she had gone to sleep. She was awakened by a noise as of big guns, and she and her husband got up and went out on the gallery (N?) but did not note the train, at least she does not recall it. She feels sure the time was after 10 p.m. but hardly as late as 11, probably between 10.15 and 10.30.

C. W. Atchison was in his house facing East, the room being illuminated by a bright oil lamp. He and his wife heard a popping sound which was coming towards them, and a clean white light filled the room, making the oil illumination look red by comparison. They went out and saw the moon high in the sky, with a white streak coming towards it ("straight towards the moon"), apparently following the noise. From this he gave begin N 82 E, alt 36; end S 79 E alt 54 $\frac{1}{2}$ (reversed?). Atchison suggested we see Lewis, the postmaster, at London. Just as we left, R. B. Gibbs found us and told us that old man Marion Davis was camped between Junction and Menard at the 10 Mile Well and saw it; he now lives in the edge of Junction.

At London, Albert Fritz told us he was at Bear Creek about 9 miles above Junction on the Menard Road and saw it. A. S. Adams, grocery and cafe owner, was with Don Barr in a melon patch 2 miles practically due N of London lying down on their backs in order to wait for the deer to come feed on the melons when the moon rose (he insisted on that point). I believe they were in a cotton patch; Don Barr's present location is unknown. Adams saw the meteor go over and leave a train of smoke; it was followed immediately by a rumble. He gave beginning S 80 E alt 45, end N 28 W alt 26, all from the backyard of his store, which he insisted was as good as being out in the cotton field.

Alfred Kensing, stone worker and mineral collector at Mason, was 4.6 miles S (per slightly SW or SE) of there, lying under a china tree in the front yard of a house facing east; he had just come home from San Antonio. He and his companion heard a noise which they first thought was an airplane, then saw the light; they had to get up and run around the SE corner of the house to see the end portion of the path, but claim to have seen the fireball thru its flight. He pointed to beginning at S 47 E altitude 9, end S 69 W altitude 8 ("about the same"). He later said it disappeared behind the hills. Emil X Ischar who lives just north of there was at the time 6 miles S of there on the river shelling pecans and saw it all, but he was not at home.