

1960, July 5

Mr. Porter Rankin,
P.O. Box 1024,
Midland, Texas.

Dear Mr. Rankin:

I am in a quandary about the meteorite. As I told you over the phone, it unfortunately resembles considerably some of the specimens from the Arizona Crater (the so-called "Canyon Diablo" irons), and this is true as to shape; some rather large circular surface depressions which denote areas formerly occupied by troilite, an iron sulphide that tends to weather away; and even the presence of a little surface deposited limestone in a spot or two.

When I smoothed off and etched the area already hacked and ground on one tip, the Widmanstätten figures were of the coarse octahedrite variety, the same general type as Canyon Diablo. They did look a little coarser to me, but not enough for me to be sure.

Hence I submitted it to a man at the U. S. National but it turned out he had gone to England, and I did not hear from him till about 4 nights after you called me. He had the same general impressions as I about being uncertain it was distinguishable from Canyon Diablo, and I did authorize him to grind off that end a little better and re-etch it with their more careful methods, or even cut a thin slice off for such purpose. I have been daily to hear from him but not yet.

Meanwhile I did locate the Bob Cohen at Littlefield. It turns out he spells his name Coen and has a phone out of Olton. I talked to him one night, and with much difficulty got him to confirm the general story but only after repeatedly leading him with the evidence. He finally felt sure they had brought the meteorite back with them in a plane as you said, but he never did exactly remember being with the finder when he picked it up in the canyon. He said they had looked at so many different rocks, etc., it was hard for him to recall.

Now you understand my fear is that your finder got the meteorite from some one else up there who had brought it from Arizona. There is one of this kind, for example, now in Yorktown (South Texas) weighing almost 150 pounds, which I am about to procure for \$50. I happen to know its history and that it was shipped from Arizona in 1894.

I have not talked to your man there at Midland, because I hate to disturb him at his place of work, and besides, I am sure I could add nothing to the story he told you. Also, I agree thoroughly with you in not wanting to work any of them up about the question of values. When I talked to Coen I told him my interest was mainly in describing the mass and getting its story correctly; that is a fact, because if it really is a new meteorite, I want to report it at a convention I shall attend the end of August.

Please give me a little more time and the minute I hear from Washington I'll come to a decision. I enclose a check for \$100 just as a deposit, to show my good faith. I won't mind sending the additional \$300 once I am convinced this really is a new find from Utah. If you can think of any way you can strengthen its pedigree, you could surely help me by doing so.

Yours sincerely,

