

AMERICAN METEORITE MUSEUM

OPPOSITE METEOR CRATER ON HIGHWAY 66



March 20, 1948

POST OFFICE BOX 1171
WINSLOW, ARIZONA

Mr. Oscar E. Monnig,
1010 Morningside Drive,
Fort Worth, Texas.

Dear Mr. Monnig:

Regarding your suggestion that I send in to the M.S.C. more of my papers, I beg you to look at the record of the editorial committee during the past five years. The petty name-calling and smear campaign that has been directed at me has not merely killed my interest in contributing to its publications but has just about destroyed my respect for the society. Any society, which by the votes of 9 members and one visitor, can officially attack the reputation of one of its founders and then 18 months later rub salt into the wound as did the editor and his buddy LaPaz in the current issue of Popular Astronomy, is not one to be proud of. Every member present at the 1946 meeting was well informed that the improvement in my booklet which LaPaz now credits to the action of the society had already been made months before ~~the meeting~~.

Now futher on the matter of my writings going into the Contributions: The last paper submitted was turned down even after being read into the program of the 1946 meeting. On the occasion of its reading you were the only one to comment on it and you spoke only favorably concerning it. The discussion which followed all related to my booklet.

That the pair who perpetrated the crime which followed were out to do me injury was amply demonstrated by the fact that the vote was taken after they were informed that the modification advocated by all of you had already been made.

I read another paper at that meeting answering two published attempts to discredit my description of the Puente-Ladron meteorite. Without my permission the editor subsequently sent my ms. to LaPaz in order that he might publish a rebuttal in the same issue that my paper appeared. Then the editor officially closed the contributions to any further discussion of the Puente-Ladron. The discussion should have been closed much earlier, so far as that is concerned, because the man who stirred up all the argument never had shown enough regard for scientific accuracy to come and see the specimen about which he was writing. He has now written the "final word" and has not yet seen the specimen, which is not a very good way for an editor to close a discussion. I regard this procedure as an unpardonable breach of editorial etiquette. The aspect of the meteorite which was brought under discussion in this dispute is one which can only be settled by inspection of the specimen itself and by a field survey. The critic had done neither of these things up to the time of his 2nd. paper. I think he has since been to the field.

This same habitual critic of the Ninninger papers attempted to discredit my recording of another meteorite found in Cowley County, Kansas, again without seeing it. He boldly announced that he would have to answer my paper on the Eaton, Colo., meteorite, but I urged him to see it before attempting to write about it. After he had passed up several invitations to see it, I finally transported it 52 miles to show it to him, after which he admitted that seeing it had changed his mind.

I have the highest respect for discussions which are aimed at clarifying scientific questions but I have never seen much value in the arguments which occupy the average spit-and-whittle club and I have even less respect for those, the object of which is to tear down a reputation.

No, Oscar, until there is a definite change of policy in the editorial department of The Meteoritical Society, my papers shall go elsewhere.

Regarding the 2nd. and 3rd. paragraphs of your letter written from the secretary's office, I have been concerned as much as you have, I am sure. And we are doing everything in our power to get things shaped up for the writing of a volume along that line. Frankly, no greater barrier has ever come in my way than M.S. Since the 1946 meeting, my nerves have been in such a state that the only way I can hold myself together is to engage in field work. Even the museum work I can stand only by short shifts. Most of my life I have lived without enemies. And suddenly to realize that those whom I had regarded as my best friends were out to destroy my life-work, has been just about the fatal dose. Had the new museum venture not proven so successful I think the shock of Sept. 9, 1946 would just about have finished me.

The current issue of P.A. and this letter have me all nerves again but in a few minutes I will be out on the crater rim with a detector and that will start the nerve-quieting process and in a week or so I'll be levelled off again.

Any change in my relations to the M.S. other than my anticipated resignation must be initiated by that organization. If, and when, I resign, the whole messy business will be laid before each member of the society.

Dr. King said to me after the 1946 meeting that such a disagreement was nothing to be brought out into a meeting of that kind and no subject for any action such as was taken but he has apparently not seen fit to do anything to correct it.

I had thought lately that if the next meeting were in Flagstaff I would make one more effort to participate. I have carried on rather extensive research into the distribution of metallic and oxidized meteorites around the crater and in collaboration with other institutions have gathered considerable information on meteorite oxides but this new opening up of the doings of Sept. 9, 1946 has killed my interest in the attempt.

I shall leave the answering of your other letters until later, except to say that the Leedey stone arrived safely and is on exhibit under glass. The sending of it collect was entirely correct, as is also the restatement of our joint ownership of this fine specimen.

Sincerely,

cc. to Dr. King & Dr. Leonard

