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1961, Nov. 29

Mr. Walter White,
Science Dept., High School,
Bonham, Texas.

Dear Mr. White:

At long last here are the duplicates of the pictures I took in your office the day I saw your meteorite. I hope they are what you want, but should you care to borrow the originals for any purpose I'll gladly lend them to you.

Have you found any more pieces or done any more searching? I may have told you about the second piece we encountered, about 1 mile N and a little W of the one that hit the house. It shattered on striking limestone; the total fragments weighed about 1½ ounces. (Incidenatlly, our first stone also weighed about that much. I have the exact weights in grams at home, but am writing this from the store.)

After running out of canvasssing area (I think I have talked and left circulars at about 180 houses) I turned to some personal searching of my own and at first tried some areas north and east of the finds because I still can hardly believe the primary path is as far west as our finds indicate. However, I had no luck so I went back in near the first fall, and found a piece of slightly less than one ounce about 0.3 mile to the West, on the same Rattlesnake Creek Ranch where the shattered piece was found. It was a complete specimen, mildly oriented, easily spotted on the nearly bare clay soil on which it happened to lie. It was in a pasture west of Mr. Blackburn's house, at a spot where the grass happened to be very sparse. This piece is about the size of a persimmon (native) or less.

Dr. E. P. Henderson of the U. S. National Museum came thru here on a visit the Saturday of the Rayburn funeral, and because of possible complications we decided not to come over to see you though he'd liked to have seen yoyr specimen. We did some personal searching about 3 hours to no avail, but at one house were told of a little girl, age 12, who had picked up a piece she thought was a meteorite, only to decide against it and throw it down.

Fortunately she and her grandmother remembered where she had discarded it in the driveway running up to the house, and we found a badly weathered meteorite of perhaps 10-15 grams, more or less intact but with some small fragments and dust of the meteorite beneath it, all of which could be gathered up completely with an Alnico magnet. I let Henderson take this with him. The piece had one very badly rusted entirely brown area on it, and the underneath surface had an efflorescent white mineral. According to some recent literature this type meteorite contains magnesium sulphate, and perhaps this was leaching out due to rains. A limonitic brown stain had run over the driveway gravel for some 15 inches or so away from the rusting meteorite.

This piece is nearly another mile N and a little W of the shattered one and continues the line up very beautifully, but now you don't know whether they are really all in this line or whether we are finding them because we are hunting in the line, which is exactly what we were doing at that time.

The density of these meteorites is ordinarily low, some 2.2. or 2.3, and the metallic iron content is supposed to be only about the usual 5 to 10%. Henderson was surprised at the intense susceptibility to a magnet. I think there must be a lot of magnetite (magnetic oxide of iron) in the objects; I know it occurs in the caronaceous chodrites.

I hope you are keeping yours quite intact and not disposing of it. Should you ever decide to part with it I'd like to confer with you.

By the way, I had Henderson look up the Mighei fall and by laboriously translating from the original Russian he learned that this was a piece of some 25 pounds that fell intact near a peasant woman. It is of interest that a piece so large could survive in the "altogether".

If I come up there again I may phone you to see if you'd care to hunt with me. Let me hear from you.

Sincerely,