The PALIMPSEST

SEPTEMBER 1928

CONTENTS

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

THE PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH
Superintendent

THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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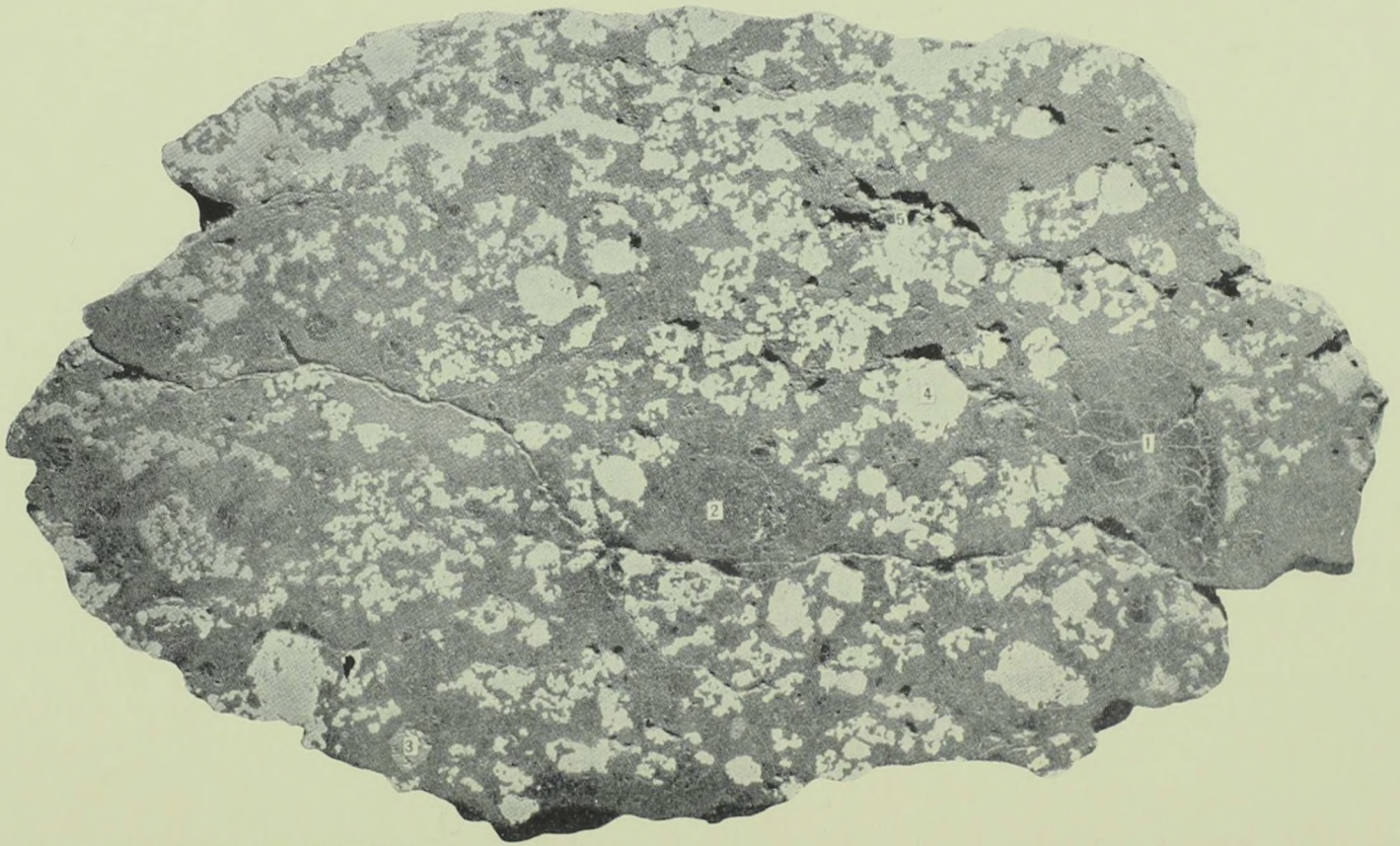


FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM

POLISHED SLICE OF ESTHERVILLE METEORITE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

EXPLANATION: 1 and 2, pebble-form masses of enstatite; 3, pebble-form mass of peckhamite; 4, metal; 5, cavities

THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

VOL. IX ISSUED IN SEPTEMBER 1928 NO. 9

The Estherville Meteor

At the north end of the public square in the small frontier village of Estherville in northwestern Iowa, a baseball game was just being concluded. It was late in the afternoon of Saturday, May 10, 1879. At the end of the game a dispute arose and the argument waxed exceedingly warm. Just as the self-control of some of the partisans reached the breaking point there was a terrific crash above. Out of a clear sky came an explosion that shook the earth, followed by a deafening, rumbling roar and punctuated by a second detonation of less violence than the first. The noise, reverberating across the valley of the Des Moines River, gradually subsided, and after several seconds became inaudible. It was as if "the gods had taken a hand in our dispute", declared one who was present.

Looking quickly up toward the west, whence came the awful roar, they beheld a strange spectacle in-

deed! There, against an almost cloudless sky, appeared a long trail of whitish smoke "like that coming from a locomotive when under high speed," apparently passing from southwest to northeast, obliquely with the line of the horizon and at no very great distance above the surface of the earth. As little air was stirring at the time, this smoke column maintained its alignment in the heavens momentarily, then it slowly disintegrated and in a few minutes became invisible.

Probably no one at the ball game actually saw the meteor in its flight, because attention was not directed to it until the sound reached the earth some seconds after its passing. A few miles north of Estherville, however, S. W. Brown, being in the edge of the timber and having his eyes directed upward at the moment for the inspection of some oak trees, saw a red streak in the sky. While he gazed in amazement the explosion occurred. It appeared to him, "that the meteor was passing from west to east, and that when it burst, there was a cloud at the head of the red streak, which darted out of it like smoke from a cannon's mouth, and then expanded in every direction."

Mrs. George Allen and her brother happened to be driving across the prairie near the village of Superior in an open rig. They were almost directly beneath the exploding mass and upon looking up were astonished to see it apparently separate into three distinctly visible portions, each fragment thereafter

pursuing a course independently of the others from the southwest toward the northeast. The paths of the three pieces were readily discernible by means of spectacular pearly ribbons of smoke which seemed to radiate from the point of the explosion and hang glistening in the bright sunlight, tracing the outline of a gigantic crow's-foot across the sky.

That the flight of the meteor was equally spectacular when viewed from a distance is evidenced by a description written by Charles W. Irish, a civil engineer, who was engaged in locating and constructing a line of railroad from Tracy, Minnesota, westward into Dakota. On the afternoon of the "fall", he was driving to his camp, situated at the extreme head of the Des Moines River in Minnesota. A severe storm was approaching from the west accompanied by vivid lightning and heavy thunder. "The advancing edge of the cloud extended from southwest to northeast in a perfectly straight line, and in the sunlight was pure white, making a strong relief against the blackness of the cloud beneath." This peculiar feature of the storm attracted his attention, when he was "startled by the sudden appearance of a bright red streak in the cloud extending from overhead backward from the edge quite a distance towards the northeast, and at the same instant when this streak appeared there burst through the cloud just inside its silvery edge the sizzling body of the meteor. It was brilliantly white as the light of the sun, and dazzling in its appear-

ance, and seemed to be puttering like iron heated white hot in a forge for the purpose of welding it."

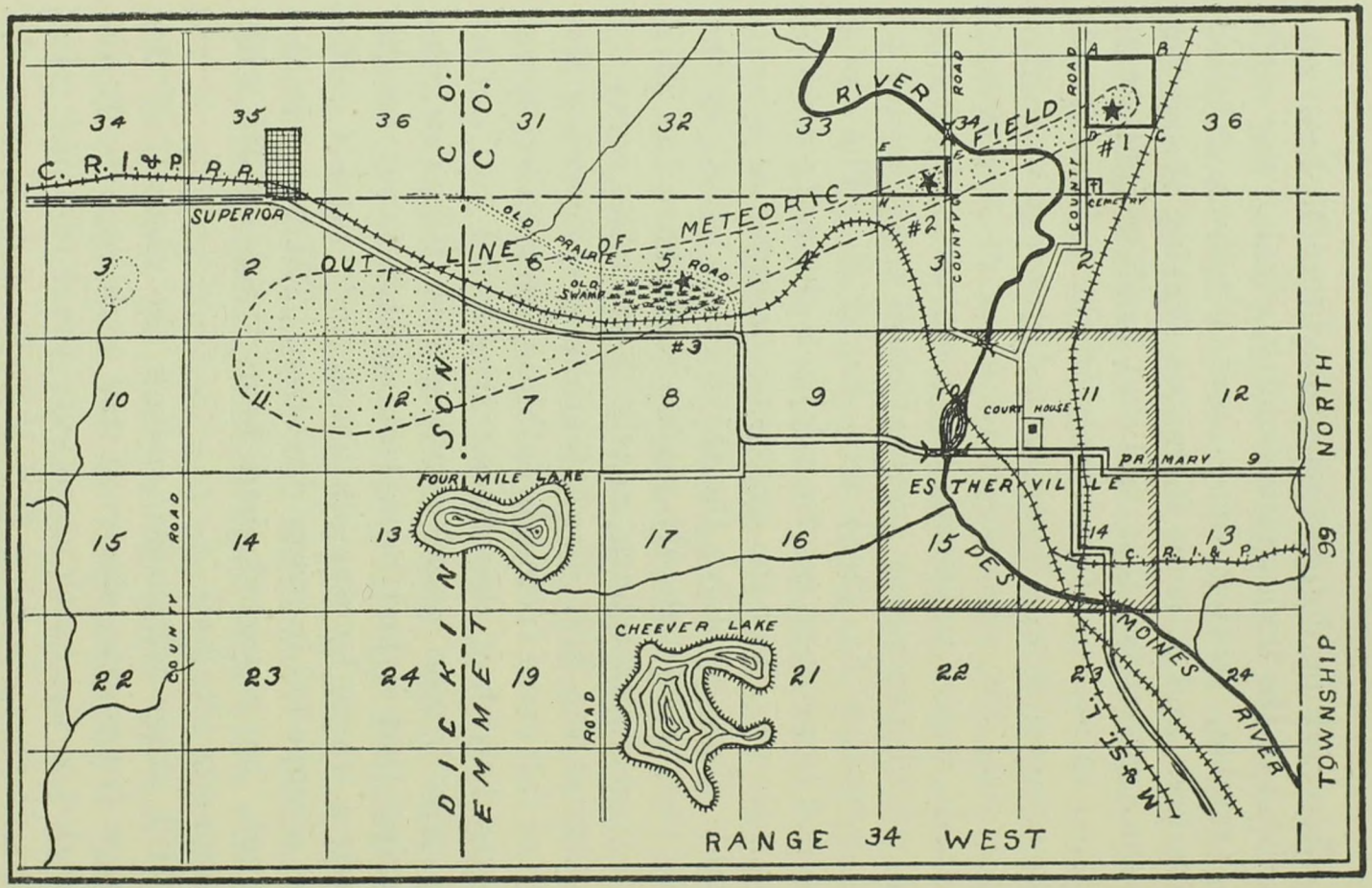
Mr. Irish and his teamster watched the flight of the meteor breathlessly as it sailed across the sky, "leaving a broad silvery white band drawn perfectly straight behind it," and disappeared in the distant horizon. "As it passed through and out of the cloud, it drew with it a long trumpet-shaped mass of the cloud vapor, which reached entirely beyond the straight edge of the cloud into the clear sky beyond it. In a few seconds this rolled into a fleecy cloud, which floated away eastward attached to the end of the silvery white band which had marked the meteor's path in the sky. This band curled back upon itself and floated away eastward, looking very much like a magnificent, broad, white silk ribbon floating away in the air, and disappearing from view in the course of three or four minutes."

Mr. Irish was probably seventy or eighty miles from the spot where the meteorite finally landed. He afterward met people along the Big Sioux River and in Dakota who saw the meteor at least one hundred and fifty miles to the westward. "Some of them saw it passing across clear sky, while others saw it passing through and above the clouds as I did." He told his teamster to listen sharply for sounds of explosion, for he fully expected to hear them, "but if they came at all the roar of the storm was so mingled with them that they could not be distinguished."

The resulting detonation seemed terrific, however, to those in the immediate vicinity, causing the earth to tremble, jarring doors and windows, rattling furniture, and in some instances shaking the dishes in the cupboards. It is said that window-lights were broken in at least two houses in the neighborhood. The concussion was heard for a distance of over fifty miles and the subsequent roar, as of a powerful tornado, was of indescribable proportions, deafening and shrill, producing a sensation of terror never to be forgotten by those who heard it. The noise seemed to proceed westward, back along the path of the meteor. That the explosion occurred at considerable distance above the earth is evidenced by the fact that it was plainly visible well above the horizon from Emmetsburg, nearly thirty miles away.

Almost the first direct testimony concerning the actual fall came from a breathless, bareheaded, barefooted herdsboy, doubtless "frightened half out of his wits", who came running into Superior, declaring that it had been raining stones out on the prairie where he was stationed, and that his cattle had stampeded in every direction. The water in the slough, he reported, had been "peppered" with fragments like hail.

Still other witnesses, noting the course of the larger fragments, observed that each apparently descended to the earth at no very great distance. Indeed, it is a singular fact that in such a sparsely settled region several individuals saw the largest



FROM A MANUSCRIPT MAP BY BEN HUR WILSON

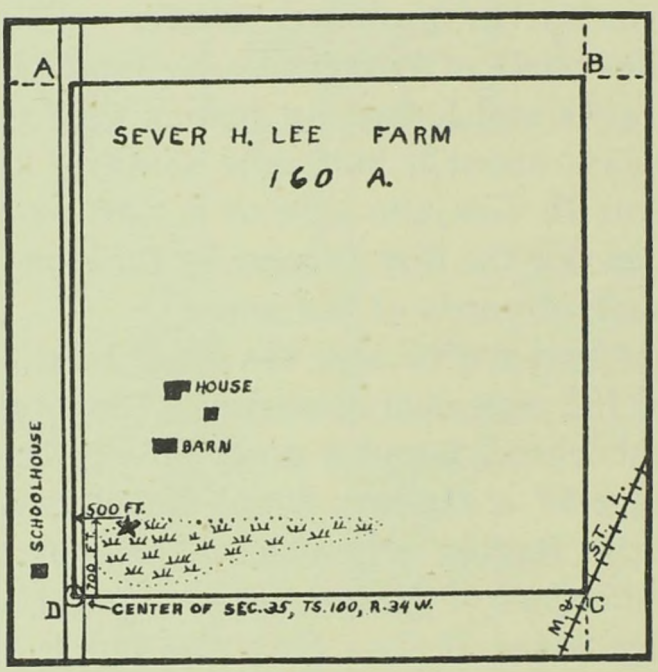
THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE ESTHERVILLE METEORIC FALL

piece hit the earth. Charles Ega, looking west in the direction of the report, could see nothing on account of the sun's rays, since it was five o'clock in the afternoon, but, following the direction indicated by the roaring sound that succeeded, he saw dirt thrown high into the air at the edge of a ravine about one hundred rods northeast of where he was standing. John Barber, a pioneer farmer residing about three miles north of Estherville, was pumping water for his cattle and looked up just in time to see the flying debris about a half mile south of his place. Mrs. Sever H. Lee, the wife of a Norwegian immigrant, also saw the dirt fly over by the slough within a few hundred yards of her house.

With so many witnesses the exact location of the principal fall was soon discovered. Several boys in the neighborhood found a great hole in the ground at the edge of a shallow slough about twenty rods east of the Barber schoolhouse, on and near the southwest corner of the quarter section recently purchased by Sever H. Lee from the old Des Moines Valley Railroad Company of Keokuk. The hole was funnel shaped, somewhat irregular, ten or twelve feet in diameter at the top, with the apex of the cone pointing toward the northeast, evidently away from the direction in which the meteorite had come. Investigation showed the bottom of the hole to be filled with mud and water.

Surrounding the hole on every side, particularly toward the northeast, lay great "gobs" of earth and

mud, splattered about on the grass. Small fragments of metallic, ore-like stones, foreign to the material usually found in the soil of that region, were also observed upon the surface, radiating out from the edge of the hole in streamers as far as a hundred yards. These particles, however, were for



THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF MASS NUMBER ONE

the moment ignored in the more intense interest and speculation as to the nature of the larger body at the bottom of the pit.

Several young men of the neighborhood arrived on the scene early and assumed command of the situation. There were Sam, Bob, and Jim Weir, George and Charley Barber, Elmer Crumb, Elmer Barrett,

and Chester Rewey. Whether they obtained the formal consent of Mr. Lee, on whose farm the meteorite had landed, to retrieve the stone is not certain. Lee was a hard-working man who had but recently come to America and had no time or inclination to dig for meteorites. Perhaps his consent to let his neighbors have whatever they could find at the bottom of the hole in the slough was inferred from his inability to express himself clearly in English. At least he offered no opposition. Moreover, until recently the land had belonged to the railroad and had been regarded as public domain.

Whatever the rights of the various parties concerned may have been, the boys began digging to secure the coveted meteorite. All day Sunday they worked in the mud, but by night had only succeeded in making a deep hole. In spite of their labor and all the ingenuity they could muster, the heavy stone was still at the bottom of the pit. Without any mechanical equipment, about all they could do was to pry up on the piece and chink under it with dirt. But it soon appeared that this was to be an endless job, for the heavy object seemed to settle back each time about as much as they had raised it.

At last they decided to secure the services of George Osborn, a farmer who owned a well-digging outfit. On Monday morning Osborn appeared with block and tackle, a windlass, and plenty of strong rope. That same forenoon the editor of the Estherville *Vindicator* wrote that "there are several men

engaged digging for the supposed mass, the hole having filled with mud and water. Nelt Barber has shown us a fragment that was found near the spot which is supposed to be a part of the fallen mass. It is a hard, dark-colored metallic substance, looking like molten lead, and when scraped with a strong knife reveals a bright lead-colored interior, but much harder than lead.''

A day or two later the editor visited the site of the fall and reported that a piece nine by twelve inches and about three inches thick had been taken out Monday afternoon. This fragment is said to have weighed thirty-two pounds. On Tuesday ''what is supposed to be the main body of the meteor'' was recovered. It weighed four hundred and thirty-one pounds and measured twenty-seven inches in length, twenty-two and three quarters in width, and fifteen inches in thickness. The unusual depth of fourteen feet to which it penetrated was probably due mainly to the swampy condition of the soil.

While working in the pit, Mr. Osborn's foot slipped off to one side into a deep hole at the bottom of which he declared he could distinctly feel another stone. His hip boot was filled with water on account of the accident, so he climbed out to empty it. The stone he had felt was never recovered.

The surface of the largest piece was described as ''fearfully rough'', with jagged projections of metal. When Osborn was asked what his services were worth he replied that if he were permitted to knock

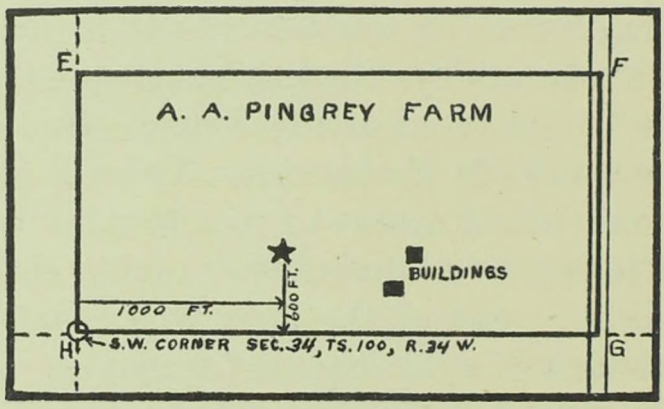
off a knob about the size of his thumb for a keepsake, that would settle the bill. But when he struck one of the knobs with a hammer, he was surprised to find that it bent to one side instead of breaking. The projection had to be bent back and forth many times before it came off. Indeed, the meteoric substance possessed almost perfect ductility, even without heating. It became quite the fashion to have rings and other ornaments made out of small fragments that were found scattered over the ground. To this day some of these relics of the famous meteor, hammered out by a local blacksmith, are still retained by residents of Estherville.

The large meteorite was taken to town for exhibition. For several days the big, black stone lay on a dry-goods box in front of the Emmet House facing the public square in Estherville. There it attracted much attention and scores of people came from far and near to see it. Noticing the popular interest in the meteorite, some of the boys who found it conceived the idea of exhibiting it for money. Accordingly they put it in a strong box, loaded it in a wagon, and started out across Minnesota, proudly displaying a placard bearing the following information:

I am the Heavenly Meteor.
I arrived May 10th at 5 o'clock.
My weight is 431 lbs.
From whence I came nobody knows,
but I am En Route for Chicago!!

The boys had not proceeded far, however, until disquieting rumors reached their ears concerning the legality of their ownership. Hastily returning, they stopped at George Osborn's place where they wrapped their prize in an old quilt and buried it in a cornfield, marking the spot by means of two pairs of stakes whose lines intersected over the place of burial. There the meteorite remained during part of the summer, while the boys hoped it would be forgotten.

Those who had witnessed the explosion of the meteor were convinced that it had divided into at



THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF MASS NUMBER TWO

least three pieces. A search was made west of the Des Moines River and on Wednesday, May 14th, a large meteorite was found on the Amos A. Pingrey farm two miles north of Estherville. This piece, which was reported to weigh one hundred and fifty-one pounds, was about four feet beneath the surface of the ground.

The third of the three largest pieces was not discovered until the twenty-third of February, 1880, more than nine months after the "fall". As witnesses of the meteor, the Pietz brothers, who spent the winter trapping in the sloughs then so common on the prairies of northwest Iowa, had decided upon the approximate location of the spot where another piece was supposed to have fallen. One day late in February as they were going along the old prairie road beside a swamp about four miles to the southwest of the largest fall and two miles from the second one, almost in a direct line, they observed a hole in the edge of the slough. Upon sounding it with their rat spear, they detected a hard body at the bottom. Surmising what it was, they began digging and secured the stone at a depth of five feet. Smaller pieces were likewise discovered near-by. This piece closely resembled the others and was reported to have weighed one hundred and one pounds. The Pietz boys soon disposed of it to E. H. Ballard and George Allen of Estherville who afterward sold it to Charles P. Birge of Keokuk.

For some reason, Amos Pingrey, upon whose farm the second largest stone fell, failed to appreciate its true value and so gave the piece to a neighbor, John Horner, who concealed it in a cave on Ab. Ridley's place. Later, when Professor Gustavus Hinrichs, representing the State University of Iowa, visited the locality and pronounced specimens of the fall to be of rare value, Mr. Pingrey regretted his gener-

osity or carelessness and took steps to retrieve his meteorite. Thereupon Horner employed Frank Davey, an attorney and editor of the Estherville *Vindicator,* to assist him in defending what legal rights he might have in the matter.

Meanwhile Governor John S. Pillsbury of Minnesota had sent Dr. E. J. Thompson, then a professor in the University of Minnesota, to obtain as much of the meteorite as possible for the cabinets of the University's museum, in which the Governor was tremendously interested. Provided with considerable cash and the Governor's check in blank, Professor Thompson appeared at Estherville in company with George Chamberlain, editor of the newspaper in the neighboring town of Jackson, Minnesota, who was a good friend of Editor Davey of Estherville. This proved an excellent stroke of business strategy. In company with Horner, the three made rendezvous at Ridley's cave in the middle of the night, where the "celestial visitor" was produced for inspection. A bargain was struck and a bill of sale executed, without Professor Thompson having to resort to the Governor's check. Thus the State of Minnesota obtained possession of an object of great scientific value which might otherwise have remained in Iowa where it fell. This meteorite is the only large piece of the Estherville meteor known to have been retained in America.

The subsequent history of the largest meteorite is even more involved. It seems that it was removed

from its grave in Osborn's cornfield about "barley harvest time". This proved to be a great mistake, for the existence of the valuable stone had by no means been forgotten.

Charles P. Birge, a Keokuk lawyer of speculative inclinations, had obtained possession of the contract with Sever H. Lee for the purchase of the quarter section of railroad land on which the meteorite was found. This contract contained a forfeiture clause in case the purchaser defaulted in any of his payments. Now it appears that Mr. Lee had neglected to make one of his payments on time and Birge hastened to take advantage of this opportunity to gain temporary possession of the land and thus obtain "color of title" to the meteorite. At any rate he shrewdly bided his time until the stone "had finally come out of hiding," when he suddenly appeared in Estherville.

There are several versions as to just how Mr. Birge proceeded to accomplish his purpose, but that of Frank Davey, editor of the *Vindicator* and himself an attorney in a position to obtain all the facts, seems the most plausible. According to him, Birge quietly obtained a writ of attachment and without revealing his plans to any one he hired J. W. Ridley, who was running a hotel and livery barn, to take him to Chester Rewey's and introduce him so that he could view the meteorite. He also took Sheriff Rob Roan along "just for a social ride". After they all arrived at Rewey's and were in the presence of the

meteorite, Birge pulled out his attachment papers and made the sheriff serve them. That night he hustled the meteorite out of the county before the other boys who had an interest in it could get a chance to file a delivery bond. The case was not contested.

Attorney Birge also purchased for speculation the large piece in the possession of Dr. Ballard and Mr. Allen as well as over one hundred pounds of the smaller fragments which had been gathered up over the prairie. Eventually he sold the largest piece to the British Museum of Natural History in London, at a splendid profit to himself. The British Museum sawed it into three sections, keeping the larger portion, weighing 60,512 grams, and exchanging the others — 50,488 grams going to the Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris and 23,208 grams to Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna. The one hundred pound piece, found by the Pietz boys, as well as the thirty-two pound fragment found with the largest meteorite, seem to have disappeared, though they, too, may repose in some museum.

During the summer and autumn of 1879, particularly after the fires had burned over the prairie, hundreds of small meteorites, ranging in size from bullets to hen's eggs, were picked up in the meteoric field between Superior and Estherville. The amazing story of the herdsboy who had witnessed the rain of stones was thus confirmed. These pieces seemed to be droplets, formed as if they had fallen from the

molten surface of the mass along the line of its passage. Many a Sunday afternoon picnic consisted of a buggy ride out on the prairie to "hunt for meteors", and usually the searchers were rewarded by finding a few pieces and often as much as a pocket full of the coveted material.

Most of the important museums in the United States, including the Field Museum in Chicago, the United States National Museum in Washington, the American Museum of Natural History in New York, the Peabody museums at Harvard and Yale, and the meteorite collection at Amherst, are liberally supplied with small fragments of Estherville's famous meteor. Nearly a thousand pounds were gathered and distributed throughout the world; yet there remains nowhere in Iowa a single collection that is worthy of the name. Even at Estherville only a few small fragments have been kept by individuals who fully appreciate the importance of their possessions. None is for sale.

During the years which have elapsed, the elements have completely filled the great hole from which the largest piece was recovered. The slough has been drained and the ground has been plowed and cropped, so that its exact location is known only approximately by the Lees themselves who still own and reside on the farm which was deeded to them by Birge the following October.

BEN HUR WILSON

The Great Snake Hunt

Among the unattractive features of life in early Iowa, particularly in the southern and eastern parts of the State, was the prevalence of rattlesnakes. These reptiles would not infrequently find their way into a settler's cabin, and occasionally even into his bed. An incident is related of a rattlesnake which, apparently about to attack a sleeping settler, was seized and killed by a dog, though not before the snake had bitten the faithful canine. On another occasion a traveller who was passing through southeastern Iowa stopped one night at a cabin where lived "two lonesome and disconsolate old bachelors". The guest was provided with supper, but the bachelors refrained from eating. It appeared that in the course of the afternoon they had killed more than two hundred snakes, and thoughts of the squirming creatures had spoiled their appetite.

In Madison County snakes were particularly numerous. They frequented the rocky ledges along the streams and there multiplied rapidly. Men wore leather leggings as a protection against them, while women were terrified by their incessant "rattling". It was said that one settler came upon more than thirty snakes coiled up in the form of a ball. At another time two men killed ninety of the reptiles in an hour and a half, and on a day "which was not

very good for rattlesnakes, neither". One pioneer used to remark that he had enough rattlesnakes on his farm to fence it. While relatively few people were actually bitten by rattlesnakes and only one or two died, the venomous creatures were a constant menace. Boys who went barefooted in warm weather were in the greatest danger, but they learned to be always alert. They could jump farther at the sound of a rattler than under any other circumstances. A plentiful supply of whisky — the only "sure cure" for snake bite — was kept on hand. Some people even seemed to think that whisky should be used as a preventive as well as a cure.

Under such conditions it is not surprising that the settlers cast about for some plan of exterminating the pests, or at least reducing their numbers considerably. At a public meeting sometime in the spring of 1848 a general snake hunt was proposed. To increase interest in the enterprise it was decided to divide the settlers into two groups and arrange for a contest in snake killing. All those who lived north of Middle River constituted one company, while the settlers south of the river organized another. William Combs was selected as captain of the north company and Ephraim Bilderback captain of the south company. To lend zest to the hunt, each participant was to pledge a certain amount of corn as a sort of entrance fee, the whole stake to be awarded to the victorious company. The only regulations of the hunt were to go forth and kill as many snakes as

possible, each company was to keep within its own territory, and all rattles were to be preserved as proof of the number of snakes killed. The Fourth of July was fixed as the date for the official count.

And so the great snake hunt was launched. Special efforts were made to get the rattlers before they left their dens in the spring, for it was the habit of rattlesnakes to hibernate in the rocky bluffs along the streams during the winter. When warm weather began in April or May they came out on the sunny ledges in the middle of the day and crawled back into their dens at night. But as summer advanced they left their winter habitat and scattered out into the brush.

The settlers were very busy that spring preparing the ground and planting their crops, but at noon every warm day some one would go down to the snake dens to see if any of the reptiles were lying around in the sun. Usually some were caught. Of course the hunters were on the watch for snakes all the time, but on Sundays, when their regular duties were not so pressing, the contest was waged with the greatest earnestness. It was customary to go armed with a club and when watching the dens a stick with a wire hook in the end was used to pull the snakes out of holes and from under rocks. Both companies hunted in earnest and rivalry ran high. The contest was spirited and deadly.

The Fourth of July, 1848, was a gala day in Madison County. All the snake hunters with their fami-

lies gathered at Guye's Grove for the first celebration of Independence Day in that community. An ox was barbecued for the occasion, and Lysander W. Babbitt, candidate for the office of State Representative, made a political speech. But the event that attracted the greatest attention was the snake count. A joint committee of two from each company was selected to count the rattles. Alfred D. Jones, a newcomer in the county, was appointed to act as clerk. The snake hunters presented their collections of rattles in bags, old pockets, and stockings. When the count was completed it was found that nearly four thousand rattlesnakes had lost their lives. "From that day to this snakes have not been common in Madison County".

The north company won the contest, but the corn prize was never collected. It seems that the hunters had determined to have the corn ground at the mill and give the meal to a poor widow who lived in the neighborhood. Some say that the committee quarrelled while under the influence of too much snakebite remedy, and the project was dropped. More likely, since the object of the hunt had been accomplished, the bonus was forgotten.

And thus, in fulfillment of a toast that was offered at the barbecue "To the Captain and Company of the Victorious Snaking Party" their names are "handed down to the future generations of Madison County for their snakish bravery".

H. Arnold Bennett

Indians at Boston

Yesterday, October 30, 1837, was made a general holiday, and nearly all the citizens, with great numbers from the neighboring towns, turned out to witness the reception of the party of fifty Sac, Fox, Sioux, and Ioway Indians at the State House, and their performance of the war dance on the Common. The whole proceedings were uncommonly interesting.

At ten o'clock in the forenoon, they held a levee in Faneuil Hall for the ladies only, and were visited by crowds of the fairer portion of creation. They were then escorted to the Representatives' hall in the State House by the National Lancers, and received by Governor Edward Everett in the presence of nearly all the State and city officers. Great numbers of ladies were in the galleries, which presented a very brilliant appearance, while a large concourse of gentlemen occupied the floor.

The Indians took their seats on the center benches, and were addressed by the Governor as follows:

Chiefs and warriors of the united Sacs and Foxes: You are welcome to our hall of council. You have

[This account of the visit of about fifty representative Indians from the Territory of Iowa to the city of Boston while on a tour of the East in the fall of 1837, after attending a peace council in Washington, is adapted for THE PALIMPSEST from *Niles' National Register*, Vol. 53, p. 166. It appeared originally in the Boston *Atlas* on October 31, 1837.— THE EDITOR]

come a far way from your homes in the West to visit your white brethren. We are glad to take you by the hand. We have heard before of the Sacs and Foxes; our travellers have told us the names of their great men and chiefs. We are glad to see them with our own eyes.

We, brothers, are called the "Massachusetts". It was the name of the red men who once lived here. In former times, the red man's wigwam stood on these fields, and his council fire was kindled on this spot. When our fathers came over the great water, they were a small band. The red man stood on the rock by the sea side, and looked at them. He might have pushed them into the water, and drowned them, but took hold of their hands, and said "Welcome, white men!" Our fathers were hungry, and the red man gave them corn and venison; our fathers were cold, and the red man spread his blanket over them, and made them warm. We are now grown great and powerful, but we remember the kindness of the red man to our fathers.

Brothers, our faces are pale, and yours are red, but our hearts are alike. The Great Spirit made his children of different complexions, but he loves them all. Brothers, you dwell between the Mississippi and the Missouri; they are mighty streams. They have great arms; one stretching out east, and one away off to the west, as far as the Rocky Mountains; but they make but one river, and run together into the sea. Brothers, we dwell at the east, and you live

in the far west, but we are of one family; it has many branches, but one head.

Brothers, as you passed through the hall below, you stopped to look at the image of our great father, Washington. It is but a cold stone, and can not speak to you; but our great father Washington loved his red children, and bade us love them also. He is dead, but his words have made a great print in our hearts, like the step of a strong buffalo on the clay of the prairie.

My brother, (addressing Keokuk), I perceive by your side your young child, whom I saw at the council hall the other day sitting between your knees. May the Great Spirit preserve the life of your son. May he grow up by your side like the tender sapling by the side of the mighty oak. May you long flourish together; and when the mighty oak is fallen in the forest, may the young tree take its place, and spread out its branches over the tribe. Brothers, I make you a short talk, and bid you welcome once more to our council hall.

This address was translated to the Indians by the interpreters, and received by them with the usual guttural exclamations.

Keokuk replied to his excellency in the following words:

I am very much gratified to have the pleasure of shaking hands with the great chief of the State and the chiefs who surround him. The remark you made just now, that the Great Spirit made both of us,

though your skin is white and mine red, is true. He made our hearts alike. The only difference is, that he made you to speak one language and me another. He made us hands to take each other by, and eyes to see each other. Brother, I am very happy to be able to say before I die, that I have been to the house where your fathers used to speak with ours, as we now do with you; and I hope the Great Spirit is pleased at this sight. I hope he will long keep friendship between the white and red man. I hope that he sees us, and that our hearts are friendly to each other. My remarks are short, and I shall say no more, but take all our friends here by the hand, and hope that the Great Spirit will bless them.

Wapello, a principal chief, followed Keokuk.

I am very happy to meet my friends in the land of our forefathers. I recollect, when a little boy, of hearing my grandfather say that at this place the red man first took the white man by the hand. I am very happy that this island can sustain so many white men as have come on to it; I am glad that they can find a living, and happy that they can be contented with living on it. I am always glad to give the white man my hand, and call him brother. I am glad to hear the white man call us his brethren. It is true that he is the older of the two, but where I live my tribe is the oldest among the red men. I have shaken hands with many different tribes of people, and am very much gratified that I have lived to come and talk with the white man of his fathers

in this great house. I shall go home, and tell my brothers that I have been to this great place, and it shall not be forgotten by me or my children.

Then spoke Waucoshaushe, a Fox war chief, who had been severely wounded during the previous summer in a fight with the Sioux west of the west fork of the Cedar River in the Neutral Ground, probably in what is now Butler County.

I have just listened to the remarks made by you and my chiefs about our forefathers. I have been wishing to see the shore where my fathers took the white man by the hand, and I shall not forget it. My friends are much pleased with your greeting. May the Great Spirit take pity on all of us, and may we live brethren, as did my fathers and yours when they first landed on this shore.

Poweshiek, another principal chief of the Foxes, added his felicitations.

You have heard what my chiefs have to say. They are much gratified with their visit to this town. They were invited to the council house of my brother on Saturday, and to-day they are brought to this council hall. They are much pleased with these attentions, and will not forget them. Though I am not now able to reward you for these kindnesses I hope the Great Spirit will reward you for them. This is the place where our tribe once lived. I have often heard my father and grandfather say that they once lived by the sea coast where the white man first came. I wish I had a book, and could read in it all

these things. I have been told that that is the way you get all your knowledge. As far as I can understand the language of the white people it appears to me that the Americans have reached a high stand among the white people — that very few could overpower them. It is the same with regard to us — though I say it. Where I live I am looked up to by others, and they all respect me. I am very happy that two great men like you and I should meet and shake hands together.

The remaining civil chiefs then shook hands with the Governor, and afterward the war chiefs, who are entirely distinct from the former. One of the latter — we forget his Indian name, but it was the one who wears the buffalo skin and horns [Kishkekosh] — said to the Governor:

I am much pleased with the conversation our chiefs have had with you. I am glad that you noticed Musanwont, Keokuk's son; he will succeed his father and be a chief. The chiefs who have spoken to you are all village chiefs. For my part, I have nothing to do with the villages, but I go to war and fight for the women and children.

Appanoose, a principal Sac chief, arose.

I am very happy to shake hands with you; I do it with all my heart. I have long wished to come to the village where once the red and white men used to speak together. My brother who spoke last has told you the truth; he has nothing to do with the villages, but fights for the women and children. Although we

have no paper to put your words down we shall not forget this good council, nor the remarks of our friends. In my tribe I am ranked among the braves, and I have my arms in my hands. They are all my defence, and I like them very much. I wish to leave them in this house so the white man will remember the red man of the far west. My present may not be agreeable, but it is made with a good heart.

So saying he took off his arms, wampum belt, moccasins, and all the articles of his dress except the blanket, and laid them on the table before the Governor.

Then the celebrated Black Hawk addressed the assembly.

I like very well to hear you talk of the Great Spirit. He made us both of one heart, though your skin is white and mine red. When the first white men came on to the island, we thought they were French. They were our brothers, as you are. Your heart is white, and so is mine. On our journey your white brothers hung round our necks white medals such as the French gave us. The Great Spirit is pleased at our talking together to-day. I have lived for a long time between the Mississippi and Missouri. I like to hear you talk of them. I have got to be old. You are a man, and so am I, and that is the reason we talk together as brothers. I can not shake hands with all my friends in particular, but by shaking hands with you I shall with them.

Keokuk presented his son, Musanwont, to the

Governor, saying that he was young, but he had a heart, and would not forget what had passed on this occasion.

The Governor then presented his son to Musanwont, and they shook hands together.

Another chief, whose name was not recorded, spoke last.

Brother, I wish to give you the pipe of a chief. I leave it for you to remember me by. I am happy that our chiefs have had this conversation with their white brother. I am part white myself; my father was a Frenchman. He is now an old man, and has put me in his place, and I am a brave among my tribe. He has often told me of the place where the white man first landed. It was not so old a story then as it is now. I am very happy to see you and take you by the hand in this great council house of your forefathers. I leave you the pipe and my club as an evidence of my rank.

Governor Everett requested the interpreter to say to the chiefs that their white brethren had listened to their speeches with great satisfaction. He thanked them for their gifts, in exchange for which he should have the pleasure of offering them some white men's arms, and some small articles of dress for the women and children — perhaps of little value in themselves, but which, he hoped, would be received as tokens of friendship and good will.

The company then proceeded to the balcony in front of the State House, where the Governor pre-

sented each of the warriors a sword, a pair of pistols, and a blanket, and the women some bright shawls and trinkets. He also gave Keokuk's son a beautiful little rifle, remarking, as he did so, that he hoped he would soon be able to shoot buffaloes with it.

The view from this balcony was beautiful in the extreme. Thousands upon thousands were collected in the court yard of the building, on the Common — which was nearly filled from Park to West streets — and in the streets, while the windows and roof of every house affording a prospect of the scene were filled with spectators, a great part being ladies.

After showing themselves to the multitude, the Indians partook of a collation in the Senate chamber, and were then escorted to the Common, where they performed a war dance to the gratification of the assemblage. They were afterwards conducted to their lodgings, at Concert Hall, where Keokuk and Black Hawk addressed the crowd in front of the building. In the evening, they visited the Tremont Theater.

Every thing went off without injury to life or limb, though, from the immense crowd present, we should not have been surprised had the contrary been the fact. The military made a fine appearance. The National Lancers, from being mounted, attracted the principal attention of the Indians.

The delegation left Boston at noon on the following day, bound for New York.

Comment by the Editor

IOWA METEORITES

Since the dawn of civilization men have tried to discover the true nature of the universe. Theologians have speculated upon the heavens as the future abode of mankind, while almost every one has wondered what the stars are made of. That the materials of the universe are substantially the same as those of the earth may be demonstrated by comparing certain lines in the spectra of light from distant stars with identical lines in the spectra of terrestrial elements heated to a gaseous state. However satisfying such proof may be to the physicist, most people are much more impressed by a personal examination of those celestial derelicts, called meteorites, which occasionally drop into the lap of Mother Earth quite unannounced.

As a place for the observation of meteors, Iowa has been unusually favored. The three largest meteorites of North America, whose coming was witnessed and recorded, all fell within Iowa — one at Amana in 1875, another at Estherville in 1879, and the third near Forest City in 1890. Over eight hundred pounds of meteoric stone were found at Amana, the largest piece weighing seventy-four pounds; at Estherville fully a thousand pounds of "celestial

debris" were recovered, including one specimen that weighed four hundred and thirty-one pounds; while the two largest masses of the Forest City fall weighed eighty-one and sixty-six pounds respectively. Larger meteorites have been found in North America, but no one knows when or how they came. Indeed, there is only one meteorite in the world of which the circumstances of its arrival are known, that is larger than the principal mass of the Estherville meteor: the Knyahinya meteorite which fell in Hungary in 1866 weighed five hundred and forty-seven pounds.

Another unique feature of the Estherville fall is the fact that, of those which have been witnessed, it holds the world's record for depth of penetration into the earth. The great Knyahinya meteorite was found only eleven feet beneath the surface, while the largest Estherville fragment was fourteen feet deep.

Most meteorites are either predominantly stony or metallic in substance, but the Estherville fall belongs to the relatively rare mesosiderite (ironstone) type — the largest of its kind that has been observed as a meteor. Moreover, it is metamorphic in structure, a fact of great significance because it reveals conditions in the geological history of meteoric materials which correspond to the processes of terrestrial evolution. What a momentous commentary upon the structure of the universe!

J. E. B.

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