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Colorado National Monument

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Meteor Crater Museum

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732-02

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REGION THREE
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Mesa Verde

March 18, 1947.

Dr. H. H. Nininger,
Meteor Crater Museum,
Winslow, Arizona.

Dear Dr. Nininger:

In his monthly report for February, Custodian B. R. Finch, of Colorado National Monument, Fruita, Colorado, reports the explosion and fall of a meteor on February 17. He indicates that eye witnesses believe the meteor fell to the west of the monument.

If you have not already had a report of this phenomenon and wish to obtain more detailed information, I am sure that Custodian Finch will be glad to provide you with any additional information he may have.

Sincerely yours,

NATT N. DODGE

Natt N. Dodge,
Regional Naturalist.

cc: The Superintendent, Mesa Verde (in duplicate).

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732-02

Mr. H.H. Nininger, Director,
American Meteorite Museum,
Winslow, Arizona

The meteor which is believed to have fallen somewhere in the vicinity of the Colorado National Monument on February 17 was not seen by any of our personnel. The two rangers and myself were at our homes at approximately 6:30 PM. An explosion rattled our windows and brought us all outside to investigate. All of us agreed that it was an explosion of some kind but none of us thought about it being a meteor. After checking all possible sources of an explosion on the monument we decided it must have been blasting on the State highway construction.

The next day local newspapers and radio carried an account of a falling meteor. The Daily Sentinel in Grand Junction asked all eye witnesses to phone or write concerning what they saw. They have consequently built up a file of information which is not very conclusive at the present time. However, Mr. Alfred Look who is handling this assignment loaned us the file and the following answers to your seven questions is based on that. Mr. Look requests that if you draw any conclusions or do any further research on this meteor that you keep him informed.

1. Explosion heard at Headquarters Colorado National Monument. Also seen and heard by several observers from Craig, Colorado to Monticello, Utah. (See attached list of names and addresses of people replying to Daily Sentinel request.)

2. Very few of the observers mention time and those who did are rather vague. Times vary from 6:30 to 7:30 PM. We believe that it was very close to 6:30 PM however, exact time was not checked.

3. Exact directions are also lacking. However, a check on all observers seems to place the meteor as having traveled from east to west and either exploding or falling somewhere within a circle 25 miles in diameter with the center about 40 miles northwest of the Colorado National Monument. A map of this area is enclosed with the location marked in red.

4. To some observers it passed behind the horizon. But most described it as bursting in the air.

5-6. No information available.

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7. Practically all observers mention the explosion. But the greatest effect seems to have been at the Colorado National Monument.

A few descriptions from observers follow:

1. " I was amazed at the brightness of the meteor and the trail of light that followed it through the sky."

2. "I was milking; suddenly the shed lighted up as though a powerful light had been snapped on. All the colors of the rainbow were playing around me. I jumped up in time to see the meteor just before it burst. It reminded me of flares over Saipan and other islands in the Pacific."

3. "We heard a large boom. It shook our house and rattled the windows. Hills close by kept us from seeing where the meteor landed but the sky was lighted brightly for several seconds."

4. "The meteor that passed over Grand Junction passed over Glade Park. It looked like a large ball of fire and behind it trailed a streaming tail white hot. It illuminated the entire country. The tail looked 150 feet long. It seemed to explode and shook the entire country causing livestock to jump. It was going at a terrific rate of speed and looked more like a rocket bomb."

We are enclosing two clippings from the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel which summarize all know data. We are sorry that we cannot send more definite information. If we can be of further service please let us know.

Sincerely yours,

B.R. Finch
Custodian

Enclosures: Two clippings from paper
Map of vicinity
List of names and addresses of eye witnesses

cc: Regional Naturalist ✓
Sup't. Mesa Verde