

METEORITES AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM - 2

National Capital
Amateur Astronomers Association
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Dealers are one source of material and occasionally a private collector leaves his collection to the Museum. Meteorites from the Roebling collection of minerals augment the display at the National Museum.

Stories of meteorite discoveries are full of human interest. Oftentimes a farmer snags his plow on a heavy stone, digs it out and drags it to the nearest stone fence or edge of the field. Look for these celestial bodies in old stone walls.

In 1940 a young farmer in Georgia struck such an object in his field. To him, its unusual weight and appearance were an omen of buried treasure. Disappointed, he kept a few bits and buried the rest in a deep hole. A friend sent a piece to the Museum where it was identified as a meteorite, and eventually the entire mass of 1760 pounds was exhumed and shipped to Washington. After study of its weathered crust and the geology of the surrounding territory, it is thought to be the oldest known meteorite. Geologists think it may have fallen when the beds in which it was found were part of the sea bottom in Miocene times and that erosion has since exposed the meteorite.

Another specimen was found by two Japanese men from a relocation camp in Utah. They were seeking mineral deposits when they came upon this ponderous rock. Tests of a small fragment showed it was metallic, but what? Dr. Henderson identified it as an iron meteorite and advised the finders to avoid publicity. The fellows built a sledge and dragged the stone to camp. It finally reached the National Museum, along with snapshots of the men and the iron. The catch in this "deal" was that the meteorite was found on public lands and therefore legally belonged to the Museum! So the discoverers were rewarded for finding it and for their efforts in shipping it east.

(Continued again.)

Pres., Dr. Edgar W. Woolard, 1232 30th St. N.W. (7)
V.P., Major U. S. Lyons, 4315 Chesapeake St. N.W.
Treas., Mr. Geo. L. Skirm, 4304 Brandywine St. N.W.
Sec., Mrs. Wm. P. Harris, Jr., 4315 Chesapeake St. N.W.

THE SEISMICITY OF THE EARTH will be the subject of an illustrated lecture by Mr. Frank Neumann, Chief of the Section of Seismology, U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, at the meeting on Saturday, April 7th, 8 p.m. at the National Museum.

The book by N. H. Heck, "Earthquakes" (Princeton University Press, 1926) is an excellent general reference on this subject. The phenomena of earthquakes provide data of great value to astronomy about the structure and properties of the Earth as a planet; a brief discussion is given by Russell, Dugan and Stewart, "Astronomy," Vol. I, Art. 154.

---Edgar W. Woolard

NOMINATING COMMITTEE. In accordance with the change in the procedure for the election of officers that was adopted this year by the Association, the following Nominating Committee has been appointed:

- Mr. E. V. Smith
- Miss Mabel Sterns
- Lt. Marion Wagner

Members are urged to send suggestions for nominees to this Committee. The election of officers will be held at the meeting on May 5th. The Committee will submit at least one candidate for each office, and further nominations will also be received from the floor.

---Edgar W. Woolard

HISTORY OF ASTRONOMY CLASS will meet April 23rd, 7:30 p.m. at the home of Dr. Woolard, 1232 30th St. N.W.

"A KEY TO THE UNIVERSE" was the title given to variable stars by Mr. Morgan Cilley, speaker at our last meeting. As background material, he explained that parallax is the apparent angular shifting of an object caused by change in the position of the observer, and that there are two kinds of magnitude, apparent and absolute. Apparent magnitude, of course, refers to brightness as seen by the eye, but absolute magnitude considers the size and distance of an object, and is the magnitude of any star at a distance where the parallax is .1 of a second or 32.6 light years. Pollux is the only first magnitude star that has the same apparent and absolute magnitude.

First magnitude stars are 2.51 times as bright as second magnitude, and 6.30 times as bright as third. They are 100 times as bright as sixth magnitude stars which are the faintest stars visible to the naked eye, and 10,000 times as bright as those of eleventh magnitude.

There are three kinds of variables, long period variables of the Mira class, eclipsing variables of the Algol type, and pulsating variables known as Cepheids. There is a relationship between the periods of these stars and their absolute magnitude, a relationship that reveals distances of objects not obtainable in any other way.

Mr. Cilley told us that fancy equipment is not necessary to study variables and their periods, and expressed the hope that some of our members would be interested in enlisting in the AAVSO, an amateur association of variable star observers.

---U. S. Lyons

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS:

Mrs. Olga S. Moncure, 3500 14th Street, N.W.
Miss Edith F. Reilly, Nautical Almanac Office
Mr. Laurence D. Hampton, 1740 New Hampshire Ave.

STAR DUST SPEAKS

In order that we may have a common understanding of the whys and wherefores of this pamphlet, we propose the policy set forth below:

This brochure is sent without charge to members of the NCAAA every month from September to July. It is written for our members and by them, with possibly an occasional exception of a contribution accepted from a non-member.

The bulletin serves as a schedule and record of events of the Association, giving meetings, lectures, classes, business matters, elections, and other pertinent data, thus keeping the membership informed of what has transpired, and future programs.

Henceforth, summaries of lectures will be submitted for approval of the speakers before publication.

Star Dust endeavors to carry names of committee members as appointed, reports of committees and officers, and reviews of astronomical and similar publications. Items about outside events of interest to amateur astronomers are included from time to time.

Non-members may obtain Star Dust regularly by furnishing self-addressed, stamped envelopes, in so far as the supply of bulletins will allow after the regular distribution.

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