

THE METEOR

Estherville's famed meteor landed on the Sever Lee farm, approximately one mile north of Estherville on the county gravel road that leads to (old) Emmet Consolidated School. The date was May 10, 1879. Many persons in and near Estherville were startled by a terrific explosion in the sky. The earth trembled, china shifted on the cupboard shelves, doors and windows jarred, and window panes in at least two houses near Estherville were broken. The explosion was followed by thunderous sounds and the appearance of what seemed a ball of fire, traveling from southwest to northeast. A herd boy near Superior, Iowa reported that falling stones had caused his cattle to stampede, and other boys at Four Mile Lake said the placid waters had been peppered with small pebbles. The largest piece of the meteor fell in a six-foot hole on the Sever Lee farm, north of Estherville. On May 11, 1879, eight young men of the neighborhood vainly attempted to raise it from the mud and water, where it lay buried 14 feet below the surface. They then hired a well digger, George Osborn, to raise it. It weighed 437 pounds, its "fearfully rough" black surface was broken with metallic glitter. Later, hearing their ownership was being questioned, the boys wrapped their treasure in quilts and buried it in Osborn's cornfield. Through legal manipulations the boys finally lost ownership to this piece of the meteor.

The second Meteorite was found on the A. A. Pingrey farm (section 34, Emmet Township) four days following its descent. Weighing 151 pounds it was buried four and one-half feet on a dry knoll two miles west of the first find. Pingrey, unaware of its value, gave the stone to a neighbor, John Horner, an act which he later regretted. Horner hid his treasured gift in a cave on the land of Ab Ridley where, by the glimmer of a lantern, occurred the transaction by which the University of Minnesota became the owner of the piece.

The third large portion, 92 1/2 pounds, was found by the Pietz brothers, trappers, in February 1880. It had dropped into a dry slough four miles southwest of the first find, and had penetrated five feet.

Some 5,000 small sparkling bits have been found in surrounding areas.