

METEORITE FOUND IN LAURENS COUNTY

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A meteorite “was found, in the year 1857, in the northwest corner of Laurens County, South Carolina, and was deposited in the cabinet of the Laurensville Female College, at Laurens C. H., very soon after its discovery. It was sent to the New Orleans Exposition of 1884–85, where it formed a part of the State exhibit of South Carolina.” [1 ,2]

The original meteorite was described as having a weight of 4.75 pounds (2.15 kilograms) [3] and being “approximately 9 x 8 x 7 cm (3.5 x 3.1 x 2.8 in). It has been described as having a cuboidal [cubical] form with a smooth, cone-shaped face at one end.” [4] It is thought to have struck the Earth some significant time before being found because it showed signs of terrestrial weathering. [5] The meteorite is formally characterized as being “iron, fine octahedrite.” [6]

The Laurens meteorite is considered special because of its “well marked relation to a cuboidal form; a shape very rarely, if ever before, observed in masses of this nature,” [7] and because it “was composed of two austenite [metallic, non-magnetic form of iron] crystals which were in twin position, probably the first observation of this kind.” [8]

Pieces of the Laurens meteorite have been studied and are in the collections of numerous institutions around the world: Vienna (1,537 g), Chicago (81 g), Budapest (81 g), London (61 g), New York (40 g), Prague (40 g), Paris (39 g), Washington (12 g). [9]

[1] Hidden, William Earl, “On a Meteoric Iron from South Carolina,” *Scientific American Supplement*, Vol. XXII, No. 548, July – December 1886, Munn & Co. Publishers, New York, 1886, p. 9012.

[2] *Ibid*, The author credited “Mr. R. W. Milner, of Laurens C. H., South Carolina, for his information as to the history of this very interesting mass of meteoric iron,” p. 9012.

[3] Reeds, Chester A., Ph.D., “Catalogue of the Meteorite in The American Museum of Natural History As of October 1, 1936,” *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. LXXIII, Art. VI, p. 588.

[4] Buchwald, Vagn F., *HANDBOOK OF IRON METEORITES, Their History, Distribution, Composition and Structure*, University of California Press, Oakland, CA, 1975, p. 760

[5] *Ibid*, p. 760.

[6] *The Catalogue of Meteorites*, Natural History Museum, London, data retrieved 12/08/2016, <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/our-science/data/metcat/search/>

[7] Hidden, p. 9012.

[8] Buchwald, p. 759.

[9] Buchwald, p. 760.