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## Meteor Mountain

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## METEOR MOUNTAIN

DAVID H. BOOT

One of the greatest natural curiosities in the world, though very little known, is Meteor Mountain, which is located about forty miles southeast of the town of Flagstaff, Arizona, and about ten miles south of the town of Sunshine, Arizona, that is, it is located in the



FIG. 98.—Upper part of rim "splash" at the northwest corner of the crater. The only place where one can climb down to the bottom.

north central part of the state. It is said by the men of the United States Geological Survey to be probably the most mysterious geological feature of the United States, lacking, as it does, all parallel anywhere in the world, and its exact cause being held in doubt by many geologists. But after visiting and investigating the site and examining the records of the mining operators who have worked there, and viewing the many large and small fragments of meteoric iron found in and about the crater the author is quite sure that the general opinion that it is the work of a giant meteor is correct. This monster meteor must have fallen ages ago, for the wind-blown sands of the great American desert have drifted in over the high walls of the rim "splash" and have filled the pit above the meteor

to a depth of at least eight hundred feet, that being the least depth, as shown by the miner's daily "log", to the solid material at the south edge of the pit. Borings very much deeper



FIG. 99.—Looking south across the crater from the top of the north side of the rim "splash."

than this at the center of the pit failed to reach the buried meteor, probably because it entered the earth at an angle. There still remains six hundred feet of unfilled pit, and the time elapsed since the meteor fell may be dimly guessed at by the very slight

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effect of the wind-blown sands alongside the miners' buildings in the eleven years that have elapsed since the last work was done there. The pit is about four thousand feet in diameter and nearly

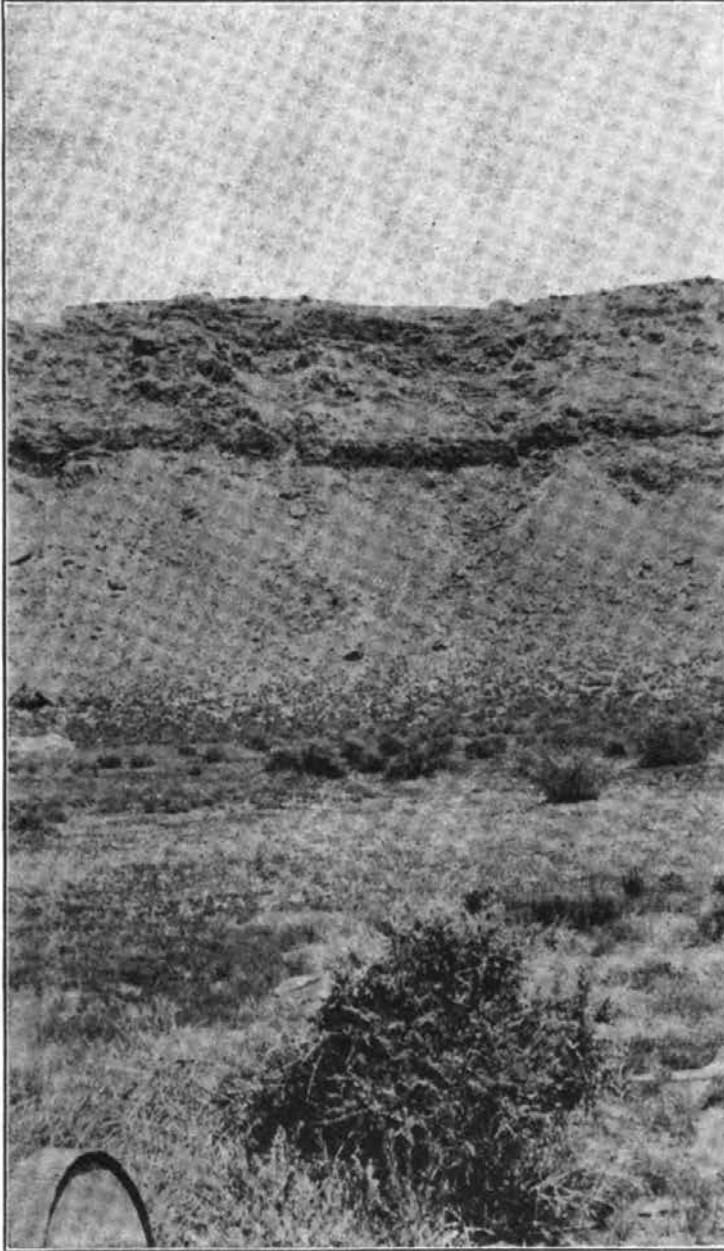


FIG. 100.—Looking west at the 600 foot wall of the pit from the middle of the bottom of the crater.

circular in shape. The rim of splashed-up rock is a very conspicuous object on the desert, rising, as it does, upwards of a hundred feet above the plain. The great number of fragments of

meteorite found scattered about led to extensive mining operations, the miners hoping to reach the great bulk of iron ore believed to be in the pit bottom. Several things have operated to prevent

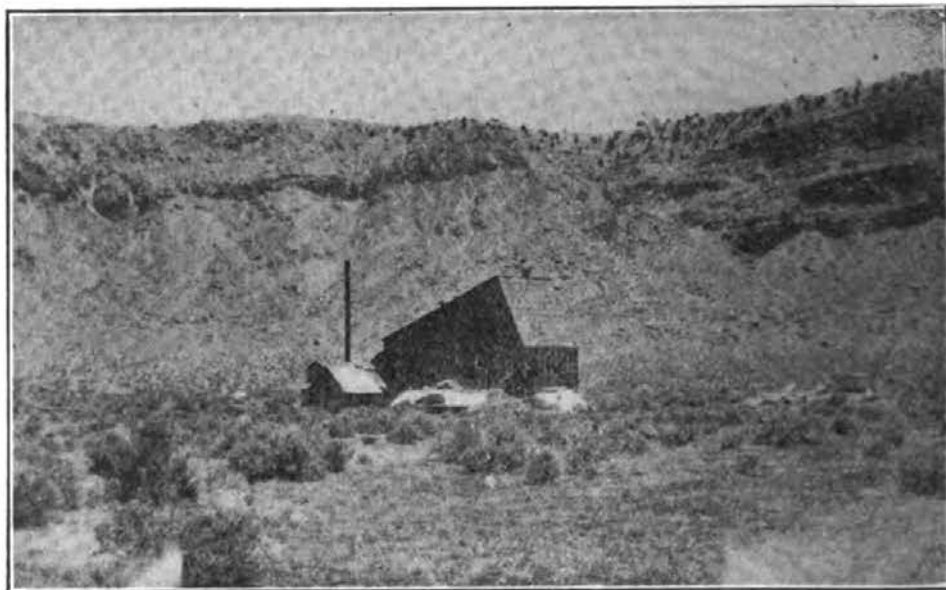


FIG. 101.—View of the south wall of the crater from a point a little north-east of the center of the bottom of the pit.

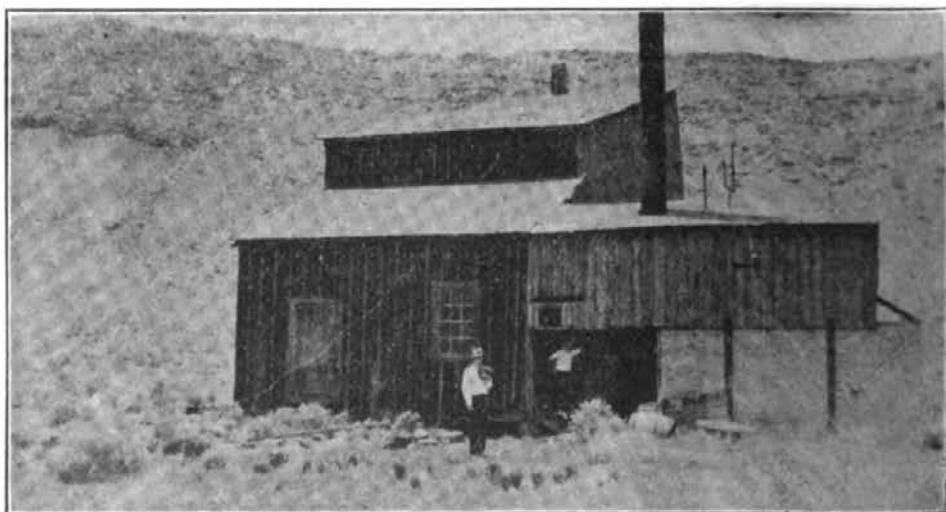


FIG. 102.—An abandoned miners' building in the bottom of the crater near the middle of the pit.

success, one of the worst being the fine, wind-blown sand, at least eight hundred feet deep in the crater, and which is very difficult to keep out of the mining shafts, because being very dry and very fine,

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neighborhood. A worse trouble is total absence of water for many miles, while a fourth difficulty is the terrible heat in the bottom of the pit, as the writer can testify from experience; the vertical walls, six hundred feet high, shutting off all air currents, and the clear sky of the Arizona desert working terrific effects with the brilliant sun of

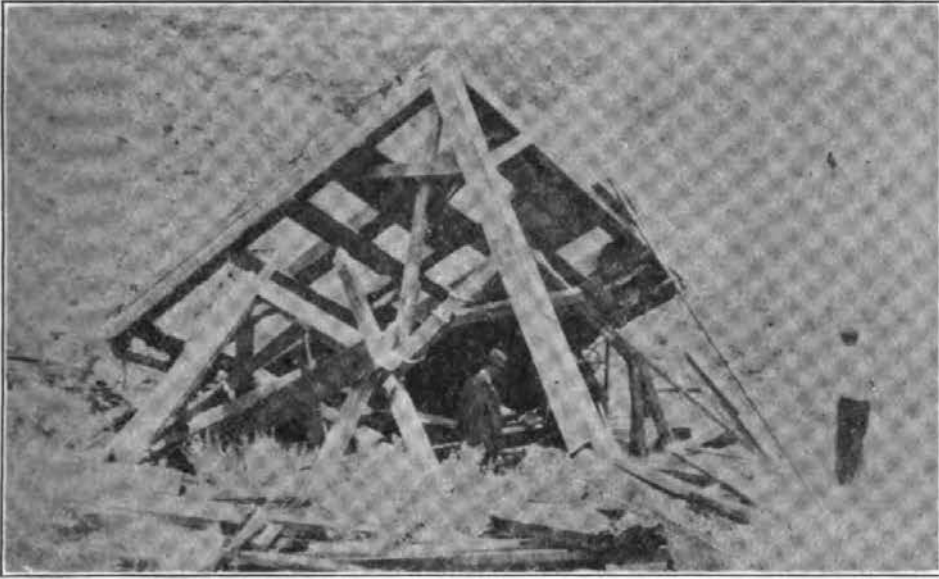


FIG. 103.—An abandoned shaft in the bottom of the crater.

the southwest. Very many fragments of the meteoric rock were examined by the author, the largest weighing eighteen hundred pounds, being so heavy that three strong men were unable to turn it over. These are carefully kept under guard by the mining company, which still controls the spot, and except on the rarest occasions are nearly all locked in a heavy stone building on the north rim of the crater. The photographs accompanying this article show this remarkable phenomenon from various points on the inside and outside of the crater.