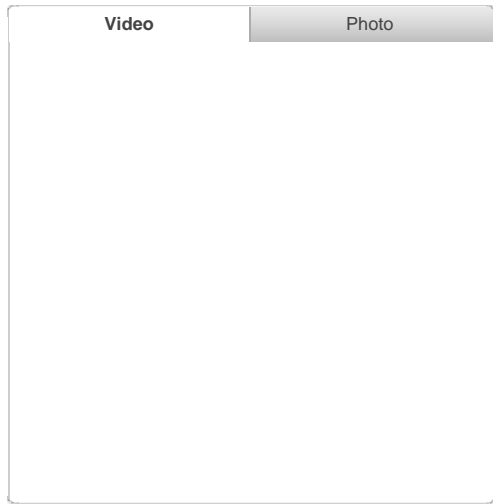


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Dad and teen sons find meteor fragments

Rock found 22 hours after fall

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Lauren Jiggetts

CHICAGO (NBC/WMAQ) - Two Illinois teens and a man from Southwestern Wisconsin said they believe they've recovered fragments from a meteor that lit up Midwestern skies earlier this week.

A rock, claimed to be found within 22 hours of the fall, was picked up by Christopher and Evan Boudreaux of Lake Forest. The 13- and 17-year-old boys drove six hours with their father, a professional collector, to Livingston, Wis. and were given the rock by a farmer.

"Literally, the kids and I were jumping up and down," said Terry Boudreaux. "We were just that excited. It was the thrill of a lifetime for me. It just struck me as, 'This is amazing. This is 4.7 billion years old. I can hold this and this flew out there in space for millions and billions of years, and it contains the remnants of the birth of our solar system.' And there's something pretty humbling about that."

Professional meteorite hunter Mike Farmer said that rock fragment is currently being tested in a lab.

Scientists at the University of Wisconsin-Madison got two hours Friday to look at another rock brought to them by another farmer who said his house was hit by the meteorite during Wednesday night's fall.

Geology professor John Valley said the Wisconsin fragment is about the size of an unshelled peanut. He said it seems to be legitimate because it's covered with the distinctive blackened crust created when a meteor superheats in the Earth's atmosphere.

Though the rock was only at the university for a short time, meteorite experts Noriko Kita and Takayuki Ushikubo used

a scanning electron microscope and X-ray spectrometer to analyze the surface mineral composition of the rock.

They identified the presence of magnesium, iron and silica-containing compounds, including the common minerals olivine and pyroxene. They also found iron-nickel metal and iron sulfide, which are often seen in primitive meteorites, reported Madison NBC station WMTV.

Valley said he's worked at the university for 27 years and told Rockford NBC station WREX that this is the first time in his experience that an actual meteor was brought in.

Scientists said they hope to do chemical tests on any fragments that are found.



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