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SIGHTING EXCITES RESIDENTS

'Green Fireball' Blazing Meteor?

The "green ball with a green and red tail" seen last night around 9.30 p.m. by many Ottawa area residents was a "fireball" resulting from a large meteorite entering the earth's atmosphere.

Dr. B. A. McIntosh, a physicist with NRC's upper atmosphere research section here, said this was the conclusion reached by the section after observation, "although we have no proof."

The meteorite that caused a flurry of phone calls as far away as Maryland moved east to west across the sky before breaking up.

Dr. McIntosh said meteorites are usually first observed entering the earth's atmosphere about 50 miles up, permitting them to be seen over a wide area.

Contact with the atmosphere causes the outer surface to melt off causing the bright streak in the sky.

The meteorite usually breaks up about 10 to 15 miles above the earth's surface.

Dr. McIntosh explained the

meteorite might be a large chunk of stone similar to that found on earth or could be a chunk of solid iron.

Meteorites, he said, are the result of a break-up of a small planet that took place many years ago and pieces are only now reaching our atmosphere.

The last meteorite that caused a flurry of excitement here followed a path parallel with the earth, appearing to come up from the Washington, DC, area in April, 1966.

Green fireballs

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The NUFON UFO Journal, Jan '78.
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