

Ottawa's Mysterious Piece of Metal

A story appeared in a Quebec newspaper in 1960 which said that early one June morning of that year a thunderous noise rocked the area around Quebec City. At the same time, according to the story, two fiery objects plunged down from an altitude of about 2,000 feet. Both fell into the St. Lawrence River at a recoverable distance from shore near the small town of Les Ecuriels.

Although investigation uncovered no one who had heard the noise or seen the objects fall, the story took a strange turn when a local resident, who supplemented his income by beachcombing, did find two unusual pieces of metal in the area. One weighed 800 pounds and the other 3,000 pounds, in round figures, and their presence there was unexplained. The beachcomber sold the smaller piece for scrap. The larger one was recovered and examined by the Canadian Arsenal and Developments Establishment (CARDE) and later taken to Ottawa.

Thus was born the tale of what became known as Ottawa's "mysterious chunk of hardware."

In the first issue of *Canadian UFO Report* we recounted an interview in 1961 with the late Wilbert B. Smith, then in charge of Canada's UFO research program, in which he said the metal "had been in space a long time before it came to earth; we can tell that by the micrometeorites embedded in the surface."

And so we learned that the metal has been a ufological puzzle ever since. One reader, Richard T. Lee of Akron, Ohio, told us in a tape recording that a fragment of the metal had been examined by the Cleveland Ufology Project with undisclosed results. Then from Mrs. Carol Halford-Watkins at Ottawa we received excerpts from her informative publication *Topside* which must represent the last though still mystifying word about this chunk of hardware.

In a 1968 issue *Topside* reported that Ronald Anstee, chairman of the Montreal UFO Society, had samples of the metal

analyzed by a professional metallurgist who was told *nothing beforehand of its history*. The gist of this expert's report was that he had never before seen a metal just like it. In particular he said there were indications that "the material went through heavy impact"; that "this composition does not correspond to any known commercial manganese steel"; and that "it is possible there may be an element here that we know nothing about." Coming from a man who knew nothing of the metal's strange discovery, the puzzled tone of his remarks was significant.

But for some equally baffling reason it was a puzzle that no one in authority was interested in solving. Despite the efforts of people like Mrs. Halford-Watkins to persuade government scientists to continue what Mr. Smith started, the Chunk lies virtually ignored on a private lawn in Ottawa.

In a recent letter to us Mrs. Halford-Watkins said:

Yesterday I spoke on the telephone to the Canadian government metallurgy scientist who had promised earlier to carry out a thorough test and analysis of the samples which he took from the mass of metal over a year ago, asking for his latest report. He informed me that only preliminary and not very accurate tests had been carried out on the samples and that the experimental machine they had been working on for more complete tests had not yet had all its "bugs" ironed out. Frankly, I got the impression that he was giving me a lot of alibis and double-talk, and after this long lapse of time, I have serious doubts that there is any real intention to carry out an objective and true analysis. At my request, he agreed to carry out some further tests, including my suggestion that he apply an acetylene torch to the metal to see if he obtained similar explosive reactions as those obtained by WBS in laboratory experiments, and that after conducting these tests, he said he would send me a "note" describing his findings. (Although CARDE, referred to previously, considered the metal of terrestrial origin, Mr. Smith pressed on with his own experiments. In one instance he found that when a small piece was heated with an acetylene torch, it blossomed into a miniature white cloud containing extremely bright sparks. As *Topside* reported "he warned that anyone attempting to heat a larger chunk of the metal might very well try himself!" - Ed.)