

The Belmont Courier

February 10, 1894

The Great Meteor

It fell in Esmeralda County Nevada Thursday night, February 1, 1894

The great meteor was that which was observed in Belmont on the night of the first instant, and which brilliantly illuminated the state of Nevada and central California fell and struck the ground between Candelaria and Belleville in Esmeralda County, Nevada, about five miles from the railroad track. The few persons in Belmont who saw the meteor described it as an immense body of fire with a tail like a comet. As it rushed through the air it made a noise like the sound of a skyrocket just as it starts upward.

At Candelaria and Belleville many people were greatly alarmed at the sudden appearance of the great ball of fire, and the light from it was so intense that the whole country round about was illuminated as brightly as by sunlight. Suddenly the meteor seemed to burst in the air, and then the light disappeared. Then came a strange rumbling noise, and also a shaking of the earth. The report is that the houses in Candelaria were shaken as if by an earthquake. On the second instant a party was organized and started in search of the meteor.

Toward evening searchers began to find broken branches which had been knocked from the trees by flying fragments, sagebrush torn up by the roots, and holes in the earth which had been gouged out by pieces of the meteor. Finally they came upon a huge hole nearly 100 feet across, where a larger portion had fallen. It struck on a bare knoll composed of sand and rocks. One report is that the ground was hot about the hole, and hence that close examination was impossible. The surface of the earth for several hundred yards is scarred by pieces of the meteoric stone. The spectacle presented by the meteor when it exploded, before it fell, was startling and beautiful. It shot out darts of light in every direction. It went to pieces overhead the place where the Combination mine is located. The hills and surrounding country were splendidly illuminated.

In Virginia City, Nevada, the meteor gave out a fiery glare of such blinding brightness that the electric arc lights paled into insignificance in contrast. The celestial messenger, in its flight, left a fiery trail in its wake of a violet tint resembling the tail of a comet.

The course of the meteor was from East to West. The illumination lasted fully a minute. At Belleville, Nevada, near the meteor's path, about two minutes after its passage were heard loud explosions, as of cannonading or thunder, then detonations lasting about 3 minutes.

A noticeable feature was the sudden fall of the thermometer at Belleville, the drop being from 30 to 20 degrees in less than 20 minutes.

A party has been organized in charge of C. T. Hill, a prominent mining and civil engineer, to go to the place where the meteor fell.