

25 JANUARY

PROJECT: Blue Pine Valley Soil Survey

TEAM: Siobhan Finnley, PhD (lead); Henry "Harry" Hammond, MSc (assistant)

GOALS: Rumors of meteorite impacts in Blue Pine Valley, New Hampshire are yet unproven. An analysis looking for iron-nickel alloy and silicate minerals in the local soil, as well as the presence of other unexpected substances, could confirm or deny these rumours. Additionally, researchers plan to sample many local stones to test if any are the remains of meteorites or meteorite impacts.

TIMELINE: 75 days

26 JANUARY

Collected soil Samples 1 through 3 today.

Sample 1: Footpath near the cabin, public trail
Sample 2: Boggy earth near river head
Sample 3: Silt from river, in rapids

First day went well. I can clearly picture how we'll proceed: use the river as a guide and work west, day by day. Enthusiasm is high from both me and Harry, we'll see how long that lasts when the slog starts.

Picture enclosed of us from today.

27 JANUARY

Collected soil Samples 4 and 5 today. Collected stone Sample A today.

Sample 4: Fine gravel from riverbank
Sample 5: Mud, likely from localized flooding, small leafy flora growing in it of uncertain species

Sample A: Sedimentary stone washed ashore next to river

Spent most of the day on a minor beach. Splashed around for a bit to kill time, it was a warm day for January.

Picture enclosed of Sample 5.

9 FEBRUARY

Collected soil Samples 11 through 14 today. Collected stone Sample F today.

Sample 11: Picea pungens rooted in it, mostly mulch

Sample 12: Riverbed, downstream of Sample 8

Sample 13: Outcropping, lichen grown through

Sample 14: Possible former rockslide, all same material

Sample F: Found embedded in cliff where Samples 13 and 14 were taken. Distinctly different material from surroundings. Maybe carved, shape seems unnaturally regular.

Today we were working as far from home as we've ever gone. Could almost see the far end of the valley. I kept us along the river headed west, and we saw across the water a beautiful pair of hills creating a little pass between them. We heard sounds of wildlife near the pass so I steered us around it, and on the other side we found this outcropping, running maybe a mile west-to-east. It was there we found the odd stone, Sample F. Harry seemed to recognize it, said it was a local legend. He complained when I took it, talking about "bad luck," but I'd be a pretty poor scientist if I let that stop my work. I can put it back later to make Harry feel better, after it's been tested. Harry was both nervous about taking it and excited to run a chemical analysis on it. Well he'll have to wait until he's caught up on all the other testing he has to do, he's only on soil Sample 7 and we got more today. All that before he works his way through the stone Samples. He has a good head on his shoulders and the constitution for this kind of work, but I'm not so sure about his work ethic. More often than not I find him reading books while he's supposed to be running tests. Reading's fine, but he has his evenings off work to do that.

Picture enclosed of Sample 11; picture enclosed of Samples 13, 14, and F; picture enclosed of Sample F.

10 FEBRUARY

No samples collected today.

Took a day to stay in the cabin. Harry was still working on his backlog so I jumped head to look at Sample F. It's very clearly extraterrestrial. The silicon and nickel levels are high enough I'd conclude it was at one point a meteoroid, though I also think it was sculpted by someone after it fell. Not what I was looking for, but a pretty clear sign there are meteorites in Blue Pine Valley.

11 FEBRUARY

Collected soil Samples 15 through 21 today.

Sample 15: Dried-out soil, near scorched tree
Sample 16: Still damp soil, from under leaf layer
Sample 17: Charred soil, near tree from Sample 15
Sample 18: Mulch from rotting splinters
Sample 19: Charcoal mixed with dead leaves and local soil
Sample 20: Rich crumbly soil, around grove's edge
Sample 21: Dry clay, possible dried-up riverbed?

Harry stayed in today to test more. Hate to say it but I worked faster without him. Very productive today. Looped around the valley, near the north edge, and found a small burned grove from after a forest fire. Came back to the lab to find Harry had knocked over the calcium test. He blamed it on the bad luck from Sample F. Over the last few days he seems to be getting more and more obsessed with that rock.

Picture enclosed of Sample 16.

12 FEBRUARY

No samples collected today.

I may have to fire Harry, he is now impeding my work. I found him ignoring his other duties to study Sample F. He called it "the star stone," which while not inaccurate is a touch creepy. At least the way he said it was, like a hiss. That plus the fact that I stayed inside all day is making me jumpy. I keep thinking I see something in the forest. Some old man (a hiker I guess) knocked on the door earlier too but I ignored him; I'm not a tour guide. But that also put me on edge. Anyway after I scolded Harry I took Sample F and tucked it away somewhere he hopefully won't find it.

13 FEBRUARY

No samples collected today.

Had a brutal headache today and stayed in. Harry was reading all day. I've given up on him. That old hiker passed by again, but at least didn't try to knock this time. There may be a storm brewing.