

08-13-86 03:56 ped [13th August 1986]

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WINCHESTER, Ky. (UPI) - Clark County sheriff's deputies searched Wednesday for evidence of the cause of a bright light and rumble heard and felt in the Bluegrass region south of Winchester.

No trace of any crashed material was found in Clark County, located 20 miles west of Lexington in the heart of the Bluegrass region.

The director of the University of Louisville's Rauch Planetarium said he believed Tuesday night's light and sound were caused by a piece of a satellite or "space trash" burning up as it dropped through the earth's atmosphere.

Thomas E. Boone, Rauch director, said he had been in frequent contact Wednesday with the Smithsonian Institution, which has a national network of space watchers reporting on unusual events.

"Nobody knows what it is," Boone said. "There is some suspicion that what it was was a Japanese satellite that was launched on Tuesday ... they suspect mirror breakage."

Boone said the Smithsonian had received reports about the bright light from every state east of the Mississippi River but only had reports from Winchester of people hearing a simultaneous loud sound.

Boone said he first felt the lights had been generated by the fireball from meteors which have lighted the nighttime skies this week.

But meteorites generally burn up in 10 to 15 seconds, while the light spotted in the skies at degrees ranging from 5 to 45 lasted up to 15 minutes, Boone said. "Everybody's seen it and nobody knows what it is," Boone said.

08-15-86 11:05 aed [15th August 1986]

WINCHESTER, Ky. (UPI) - A physicist from Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee may travel to Clark County to inspect a car covered with fine ash which may be connected to a flash of light and explosion heard Tuesday night.

About 50 residents reported seeing a flash and hearing an explosion about 10 p.m. Tuesday night, according to Clark County Sheriff Gary Lawson.

The car belongs to Nancy White, who had not been driving it. She said she had just waxed the car, which made the ash stick, and noticed it Thursday on her day off.

"It was little pieces, big ones and little ones, like something had been sprinkled on it," she said.

David Fields of the Health and Safety Research Division of Oak Ridge said he may come to Kentucky, or have a sample of the ash flown to him. He said it is possibly from the destruction of a meteor in the atmosphere.

[From UPI newswire. Copy courtesy of Mark A. Hall.]