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'UFO debris' may be lava or meteor chunk

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P-I REPORTER

The University of Washington research engineer who analyzed a mysterious black fragment that some thought was debris from a UFO said it's probably a meteor chunk or old lava.

"I'm not a geologist, but this looks like old lava or maybe ancient mud to me, because it's all full of little gas pockets, and gas pockets have crystals coating the inner walls," chemistry department researcher Bill Beaty said in an analysis video.

"If it's got little crystal incrustations, then at one point it had to be deeply buried."



Watch a video of the analysis.

The rock was recovered April 15 from the 1947 crash site of a B-25. The bomber was said to have been carrying six chunks of "metal or lava" spewed from a UFO that were recovered off Maury Island.

On June 21, 1947, former Tacoma resident Harold Dahl said he saw six doughnut-shaped aircraft hover above his boat, which was salvaging logs on Maury Island. He said one of the discs hovered to about 500 feet and released what he thought was 20 tons of metal and molten rock.

"My personal theory is that the entire UFO incident was just an exploding stony meteor," Beaty said. "If a meteor comes in at 90 degrees right above you, you would see huge fireballs that aren't moving

sideways; maybe several of them if the rock broke up from tidal forces. ... And then a whole bunch of hot rocks falls on your fishing boat."

The story was first reported in 1947, and since the Seattle P-I reported this week that the recovered rock is being displayed at the Seattle Museum of the Mysteries, owners have received dozens of calls and e-mails.

Charlette LeFevre, who runs the museum with Philip Lipson, said they plan to have the rock analyzed at least twice more, including a chemical analysis.

"To me it's very interesting that at the very impact site of the crash, we found slag similar to what has been found at Maury Island," said LeFevre, whose rock made international news, including a mention on Art Bell's weekend radio program. "We can't say that it's the exact slag that was on the flight, but we will keep investigating."

Since the P-I story, LeFevre said, the museum also has been contacted by people who claim to have information about flying saucers over Seattle in June 1947 -- the same month U.S. Forest Service employee Kenneth Arnold reported seeing nine saucers between Mount Rainier and Mount Adams.

"We now have three independent reports of discs specifically seen over Seattle," she said. "There's a lot more than just Kenneth Arnold."

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