

Life on Mars?

Scientists startled the world in August 1996 by announcing they had found evidence that life once existed on Mars. A meteorite found in Antarctica, supposedly from Mars, contained microscopic tube-like forms, which were interpreted to be fossils. One scientist boasted that the meteorite was a "piece of evolution." Carl Sagan added it was a "turning point in human history, suggesting that life exists not on just two planets in one paltry solar system, but throughout this magnificent universe." (That's quite a leap—from microscopic traces in a rock to life throughout the universe). Some scientists can look at a fetus with a beating heart and say it is not a baby, then look at this scanty microscopic evidence and declare life exists throughout the universe.

What caused this "tube-like form"? Most people didn't realize these forms are 1/100th the width of a human hair. The scientists' conclusion, that this form is a "fossil," was a biased rush to judgment. Non-organic geologic formations like those found on this rock are common. Some more honest scientists admitted this was stretching the truth to say this was a fossil.

We heard numerous reports that life was found on Mars, but there was very little publicity on the findings that recanted the previous conclusions. The following announcement didn't make very many newspapers.

Mars Meteor Mistake: Same "evidence" of life appears on other rocks" August 14, 1998
(Associated Press)

Scientists were mistaken when they thought a rock in Antarctica contained evidence suggesting life on Mars, according to three papers in a journal about meteors. One article in *Meteoritics and Planetary Science* at the University of Arkansas says non-Martian rocks showed the same "evidence" of life. The other articles say temperatures were too high for tiny bacteria to form and leave organic evidence in nooks and crannies of the 4.5 billion-year-old, potato sized rock in Antarctica.

In 1996, 15 researchers reported that crevices in a meteorite contained organic molecules. "If these are really Martian in origin and they are biological, the first test would be if there are similar objects on lunar meteorites," said Derek Sears, the journal's editor. "The lunar meteorites shouldn't have the same objects because there's no life on the moon," Sears said. "Within an hour of looking at the lunar meteorites, we knew," Sears said. "We found objects on the lunar meteorites that we cannot distinguish from the Martian meteorites."