

# Meteorite Exhibit Guide

The Lafayette Science Museum encourages you to spend some time in the meteorite exhibit in the planetarium lobby. This section of the Guide will acquaint you with the exhibit's physical layout while a second section gives background information about meteorites as well as suggestions of specimens not to miss. We encourage you to see the meteorites close up!

Three banners overlooking the Museum lobby hang from the ceiling with a basic introduction to meteorites: "What are Meteorites," "Where Do Meteorites Come From," and "How Old are Meteorites?"

Although not part of the meteorite exhibit, a bulletin board display beside the 1957 meteor panel covers changing topics in astronomy and aerospace sciences.

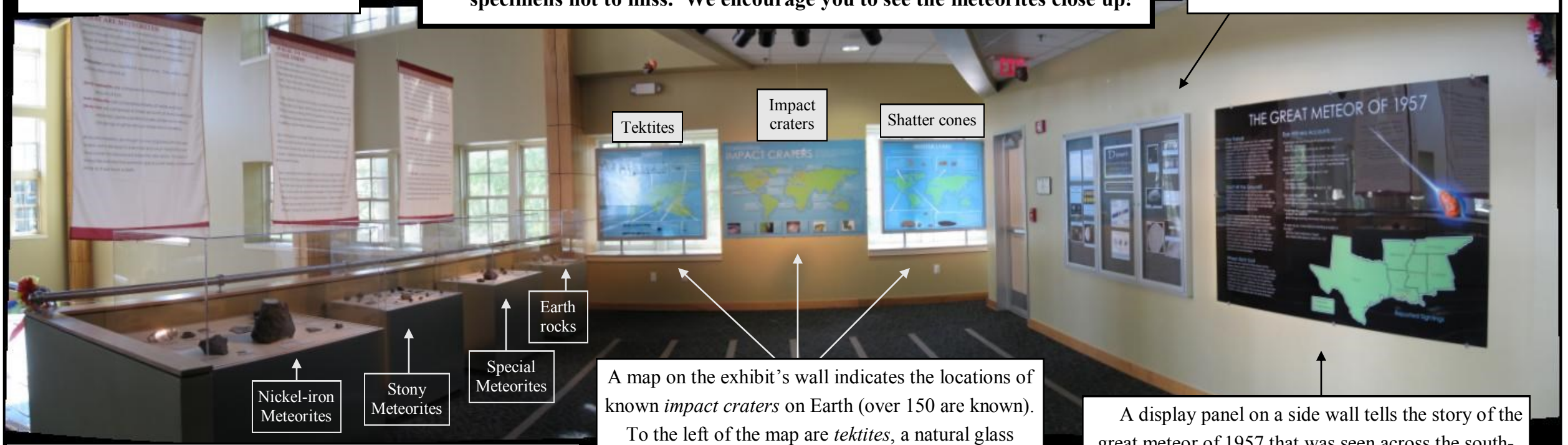


Exhibit cases display meteorites. From left to right they contain nickel-iron meteorites, stony meteorites, and "special" meteorites (meteorites of interest for various reasons). A fourth case (farthest from the planetarium door) contains Earth rocks once thought to have been blown out of the crater from the impact implicated in the death of the dinosaurs, but analysis by the University of Louisiana–Lafayette Department of Geology indicates that is not correct.

A map on the exhibit's wall indicates the locations of known *impact craters* on Earth (over 150 are known). To the left of the map are *tektites*, a natural glass most likely formed as a mix of terrestrial and extraterrestrial material during major impacts. To the right of the map are *shatter cones*, earthly rock with a characteristic cone-shaped cracking pattern caused by shock waves during an impact. Since shatter cones do not occur with volcanic craters, finding them indicates that a crater was formed by asteroid or comet impact.

A display panel on a side wall tells the story of the great meteor of 1957 that was seen across the southeastern United States, so bright that planetarium staff members still get questions about it 50 years later from people who saw it.