

## The Storm of the Falling Stars

In November 1833, many citizens of Portsmouth witnessed a shower of “falling stars” and believed the world was coming to an end.

In Abraham Noel’s account of the incident, he noted that there was nothing unusual about the weather the day or the evening before the event. On a hunting trip with his father and friends, he arose around 3 a.m. on November 13th to build a campfire. At first there were only a few meteors falling, and when approaching the earth, they would burst into fiery fragments. As the shower intensified, the atmosphere became so full of them that the night sky lit up like midday. Mr. Noel stated that it was like “sparks from a burning hickory log”, and that the “word millions would not tell the number of them”. When landing on the leaves and grass, a crackling sound could be heard. The next morning the hunting party found little balls stuck to the leaves and grass, which when crushed looked like ashes and rust.

Some people in the surrounding area were frightened and thought fire and brimstone were falling from the sky, so they began praying throughout the night. The next day, about 9 a.m., a heavy snow fell and continued until noon. The author noted that the snow fell in balls ranging in size as large as walnuts.