Northern Lights **[1]**

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Northern Lights

by William S. Powell [2], 2006

The northern lights, or the aurora borealis, are a rare, spectacular display of multicolored lights in the sky associated with solar flare activity. Usually seen waving-sometimes suggesting blowing curtains-at high latitudes across the northern sky from the horizon, the lights are mostly yellow-green with areas of red, purple, and white. They have occasionally been seen in areas such as Pennsylvania and Virginia and have at times been witnessed in North Carolina. Moravians [3] in Wachovia [4] observed the phenomenon on 6 Aug. 1772 and also reported in their daily journal for 14 Nov. 1789 that "at night the North Lights were very red with fiery beams spreading over the heavens."

In October 1865 a "most wonderful electrical display" was seen in the skies over Mecklenburg County [5], disturbing "the serenity of many of the people . . . who witnessed the gorgeous display in the after part of the night." Two late deserters from the Confederate [6] army became alarmed and approached E. A. McAuley to know what the strange sight meant. His reply: "It was the devil uncapping hell to take in all deserters of the Confederate Cause."

Additional Resources:

Moravian Archives: http://moravianarchives.org [7]

Video Credit:

"Northern Lights" dance across eastern Carolina, WNCT:http://www2.wnct.com/news/2011/oct/25/5/northern-lights-dance-across-eastern-carolina-ar-1536986/ [8]

Subjects: American Revolution (1763-1789) [9]
Civil War (1861-1865) [10]
Moravians [11]
Natural resources [12]
UNC Press [13]
Authors: Powell, William S. [14]
Origin - location: Forsyth County [15]
Winston-Salem [16]
From: Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press. [17]

1 January 2006 | Powell, William S.

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[4] http://ncpedia.org/wachovia
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[6] http://ncpedia.org/confederate-party
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