

MID-JUNE SNOWSTORM OF 1842

The latest date for the occurrence of a general snowstorm in our period over northern New England and northern New York came in 1842 on the morning of 11 June. At Burlington, Vermont, it was snowing at the sunrise observation (34°) and also at the early afternoon reading (40°) on June 11th. Zadock Thompson, professor of natural history and the Queen City's longtime weatherman, commented: "Snow during the forenoon—boards whitened and the mountains as white as in winter." ¹

Snowflakes had been noticed at this time as far west as Hudson near Cleveland, Ohio, where Prof. Loomis discerned a few falling at his 2200 observation on the evening of June 10th.² Farther east in New York State substantial amounts accumulated during the night as polar air moved down from Canada to supply the cooling ingredient needed for frozen precipitation. Essex County in the northeast reported a 4-inch covering by the morning of the 11th.³ In western Vermont the snow commenced at Vergennes near Lake Champlain at 0500 and continued until early afternoon; hill towns ten miles to the east had depths of five to six inches.⁴ On the plateau of northern Vermont the accumulations became heavy: Barton and Irasburg in Orleans County received 10 to 12 inches.³ This amount became general to the eastward across New Hampshire and northwestern Maine. Berlin in Coos County, New Hampshire, accumulated 11 inches during the day. In summarizing the snow storm and the four early June frosts, the *New Hampshire Patriot* commented: "This beats the year 1816 and all others within our memories."

Southward the depths decreased. Bennington, Vermont, reported three inches, and in nearby Brunswick the flakes were seen to descend for seven consecutive hours. In southern New Hampshire, Concord residents saw snow on the high ground that day, and at elevated Goffstown nearby the accumulation was judged to be three inches.⁵ Flying flakes were noticed as far south as Boston, according to the local

press, though Jonathan Hall's thermometer did not read lower than 46° at an observation time." The Catskills in southeastern New York were whitened, as were the higher Appalachians in Pennsylvania and Maryland." Snow was witnessed at Harrisburg, PA."

The weather map situation indicated the passage of a vigorous depression across New England on the afternoon of the 10th, followed by a strong flow of unstable air late on the 10th and throughout the 11th. It was the aftermath of the cyclonic depression that brought the June snowfall, much like the situation in June of 1816.

Ref. Early Americane Winters, II 1821-1870 by David M. Ludlum, pages 89-90.