Solar Eclipse of 1869 as seen in Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky

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**Introduction**

The Solar Eclipse of August 7, 1869, was the first recorded total eclipse of the Sun to pass over the United States. **What was the public reaction to this phenomenon?** Following the eclipse through some of the Midwest down to Kentucky showed differing results, as it had got later in the day of viewing. This magnificent and rare event of the nineteenth century fortunately was well documented.

**Methodology**

I selected the towns to investigate in each state based on two factors: **placement** on the eclipse path and **population**. Searching for the words “[Town name] Eclipse of 1869” on the web narrowed the search to include helpful resources. Contacting historical societies, libraries and museums aided with the search. Local colleges were an additional resource. These institutions, sometimes, were able to provide information from primary sources, or referrals to sources that might be found elsewhere.

**Results**

Were people aware of the total solar eclipse ahead of time? Is there any documentation suggesting those aware were planning to see it?

**Conclusion**

The public’s overall response was that the 1869 total eclipse of the Sun was the most spectacular natural event to happen during the 19th century up to that time. Some were frightened, however, for most it was a positive experience. In a time when life was hard and monotonous, it was a beautiful and memorable sight to see.

**Sources**