"It was no ordinary fire."[26] (Donnelly's emphasis)

It is believed that pieces of Biela's Comet, which had broken apart and split into two major pieces, and probably many smaller ones, was in the vicinity of the Earth at that time. It is further proposed that some of these smaller pieces of the comet entered the Earth's atmosphere and created the catastrophes described in a report of these events titled, *History of the Great Conflagration*, (Chicago, 1871).

According to this report:

> "At sundown there was a lull in the wind and comparative stillness. For two hours there were no signs of danger; but at a few minutes after nine o'clock, and by singular coincidence, *precisely the time at which the [great] Chicago fire commenced*, the people of the village *heard a terrible roar*. It was that of a tornado, crushing through the forests. *Instantly the heavens were illuminated with a terrible glare. The sky, which had been so dark a moment before, burst into clouds of flame.* A spectator of the terrible scene says the fire did not come upon them gradually from burning trees and other objects to the windward, but the first notice they had of it was *a whirlwind of flame in great clouds from ABOVE THE TOPS OF THE TREES*, which fell upon and entirely enveloped everything. The poor people inhaled it, . . . intensely hot air, and *fell down dead*. This is verified by the appearance of many corpses. *They were found dead in the roads and open spaces, where there were no visible marks of fire nearby, with not a trace of burning upon their bodies or clothing*. At the Sugar Bush, which is an *extended clearing*, in some places four miles in width, corpses were found in the open road, between fences only slightly burned. *No mark of the fire was upon them; they lay there as if asleep*. This phenomenon seems to explain the fact that so many were killed in compact masses. They seemed to have huddled together, in what were evidently regarded at the moment as the safest places, *far away from buildings, trees, or other flammable material* and there to have died together." (Emphasis and capitalization added)[27]

According to one individual:

> "Much has been said of the intense heat of the fires which destroyed Peshtigo, Menekaune, Williamsonville, etc., but all that has been said can give the stranger but a faint conception of the reality. The heat has been compared to that engendered by a flame concentrated on an object by a blow pipe; but even that would not account for some of the phenomena. For instance, we have in our possession a copper cent taken from the pocket of a dead man in the Peshtigo Sugar Bush, [field] which will illustrate our point. *This cent has been partially fused*, but still retains its round form, and the inscription upon it is legible. Others in the same pocket, were partially *melted*, and yet *the clothing and the body of the man were not even singed.* We do not know in what way to account for this, unless, as is asserted by some, the tornado and fire were accompanied by electrical phenomena.[28]

In essence, then, we have all the phenomena associated with fire from the sky described in the old chronicles. The fire came from the sky with a tremendous blast of noise, frightening and overwhelming the people in stark terror. Driving them into the fields to escape the fire consuming all the trees and buildings, the frightened people came together to huddle in the last soul wrenching moments before the noise of the blast and fire from the sky overwhelmed them.

What would such an event played out upon whole regions of the planet have induced in the minds of those who survived this catastrophe? Those who experienced the fire in the last century said:

> "The prevailing idea among the people was that the last day of the world had come. They were used to fires, but they had seen nothing like this in their lives. Their only interpretation of the terrifying roaring, the bursting of the sky with flame and the dropping down of fire from the heavens, consuming everything it touched, was that the Last Trump[et] had sounded and the Day of Judgement was upon them.
>
> "No two people gave an exactly similar description of the great tornado as it struck and devoured the village. One said that it seemed as though 'the fiery fiends of hell had been loosened.' Another remarked, 'It came in great sheeted flames from heaven.' People spoke of 'a pitiless rain of fire and sand' of the atmosphere 'all afire,' of 'great balls of fire unrolling and shooting forth in streams.' The fire leaped over roofs and trees and ignited whole streets at once. No one could stand before the blast."[29]

One survivor described the panic of the animals:

> ". . . for two hours before the fire reached him there was a constant flight across the ground of small animals . . . . [Then] a horse dashed into the opening at full speed and made for the house . . . . [He] could see him tremble and shake with excitement and terror, and felt a pity for him. After a moment, the animal gave utterance to a snort of dismay, ran two or three times around the house, and then shot off into the woods . . . ."[30]

All the people and animals were seized by an overwhelming panic. Thus, we also have a description of animals and humans terrified and fleeing for dear life, perhaps into caves to escape the terror pursuing them.

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[26]Ignatius Donnelly, *Ragnarok: The Age of Fire and Gravel*, (University Books reprint), (New York, 1970), pp. 413–414.

[27]James W. Sheahan, George P. Upton, *History of the Great Conflagration*, (Chicago, 1871), p. 372.

[28]*Ibid.*, p. 372.

[29]Mel Waskin, *Mrs. O'Leary's Comet*, (Chicago, 1985), pp. 87-88. See also, *History of the Great Conflagration*, *op. cit.* p. 374.

[30]*History of the Great Conflagration*, *op. cit.* p. 391; see Donnelly, *op. cit.*, p. 417.

But let us go now to the destruction of cities by the accumulation of several feet of ash, as described by Claude F. A. Schaeffer, all across the Near East and other parts of the globe; thus, we then come to archeology. As Alfred de Grazia pointed out in *KRONOS* in 1976:

> "A completely wooden and overstuffed contemporary house will leave no more than ankle-deep ashes when it burns to the ground, and then only on its own foundation. A flourishing natural forest and the ground cover is estimated to provide 200 tons of organic matter per acre. When reduced fully by heat, it will give up 160 tons of water, gases and other compounds to leave 20 tons of carbon residue and 20 tons of oily distillates. Further reduced to fine cinder and ash, it would be less and have less volume. If spread over an acre, the residue would amount to perhaps a pound per square foot; its height would scarcely measure 6 inches in its freshly fallen state."[31]

But instead of finding up to several feet of ash in the strata of ancient cities such as Troy, de Grazia described "a bed of ashes that may have amounted to 15 to 20 feet . . . . "[32] Therefore, we are involved with heat of such intensity that it could almost literally melt and incinerate certain buildingstones and bricks, especially those made of mud, clay, and straw commonly used in the ancient Near East. As Donnelly explains with respect to the fire that burned Chicago down, the,

> ". . . flames that consumed a great part of Chicago were of an unusual character and produced extraordinary effects. They absolutely *melted* the hardest buildingstone, which had previously been considered fireproof. Iron, glass, granite, were fused and ran together into grotesque conglomerates, as if they had been put through a blast furnace. No kind of material could stand its breath for a moment.

I quote . . . from Sheahan & Upton's work:

> "'The huge stone and brick structures melted before the fierceness of the flames as a snowflake melts and disappears in water, and almost as quickly. Six-story buildings would take fire and *disappear forever from sight in five minutes by the watch* . . . . The fire also doubled on its track at the great Union Depot and burned half a mile southward *in the very teeth of the gale . . . . Strange fantastic fires of blue, red, and green played along the cornices of buildings*.'"

Hon. William B. Ogden [the Mayor] wrote at the time:

[31]Alfred de Grazia, "Paleo-Calcinology: Destruction By Fire In Pre-Historic And Ancient Times," Part I, *KRONOS*, Vol. I, No. 4, (Winter 1976), pp. 28–29.

[32]*Ibid.*, p. 28.

> "'The most striking peculiarity of the fire was its intense heat. Nothing exposed to it escaped. Amid the hundreds of acres left bare there is not to be found a piece of wood of any description, and *unlike most fires, it left nothing half burned* . . . . The fire swept the streets of all the ordinary dust and rubbish, consuming it instantly.'"
>
> "The Athens marble burned like coal! [citing the *History of the Chicago Fire*, Donnelly explains.]
>
> "The intensity of the heat may be judged, and the thorough combustion of everything wooden may be understood, when we state that in the yard of one of the large agricultural-implement factories was stacked some hundreds of tons of pig iron. This iron was two hundred feet from any building. To the south of it was the river, one hundred and fifty feet wide. No large building but the factory was in the immediate vicinity of the fire. Yet so great was the heat, that *this pile of iron melted and run [sic] and is now one large and nearly solid mass*."[33] (Donnelly's emphasis)

Mayor Ogden sums up the intensity of the heat of the fire thus:

> "The fire was accompanied by the fiercest tornado of wind ever known to blow here, and it acted like a perfect blowpipe, driving the brilliant blaze hundreds of feet with so perfect a combustion, that it consumed the smoke, and its heat was so great that a fireproof building sunk before it, almost as rapidly as wood. Nothing but earth could withstand it."[34]

The heat coming apparently from above was of such intensity that it was capable of rendering most materials into ash, and melted metals of all kinds. In spite of this overreaching catastrophe, in some of the towns entire buildings were miraculously untouched.

The explanation that all of this destruction of life and property is perfectly congruent with the concepts of cometary debris raining down along a few paths in one area encompassing three regions around Lake Michigan, is put forth by Waskin:

> "It surely could not have been a coincidence that fires, which had been burning normally, that is to say under control and offering no serious danger to life, should suddenly, at exactly the same time on the same night, hundreds of miles apart, burst out with an unprecedented fury and become impossible to control . . .
>
> "And how to explain the hot sand that rained down in the woods of Wisconsin . . .
>
> "And then there were the balloons of [descending] fire . . . . What caused clouds of searing flame to fall from the sky on people, buildings, farmland and wood?
>
> "Fragments of a dead comet with it frozen gases, its cargo of sandy cosmic debris, which intersect Earth's orbit and crash into its surface in the

[33]Donnelly, *op. cit.* pp. 421–422. See Sheahan & Upton, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

[34]Waskin, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

worst possible place at the worst possible time—in drought-stricken regions where fires are already burning . . . . This would explain all the peculiar features of the great three-headed fire of October, 1871.

"The wind where the Comet had landed was a gale. The gases in the Comet were freed from their frozen prison. Molecules of methane and acetylene, which . . . [can burn at] high temperatures [and] ignite [at] high temperatures, . . . than the five hundred or so degrees at which wood ignites—reached that high temperature quickly because of the blowtorch effect of the wind feeding oxygen to the flames. The fires at the three places where the Comet had struck were fueled.

"Sand grains from the Comet, which had been heated by its plunge through the atmosphere and by the fiery air into which they had fallen, rained on the earth. The tremendous heat of the fire ignited the clouds of gases which were trapped inside the Comet, the clouds exploded into flame and fire balloons were the result. When the cometary fuel was exhausted, the fires gradually burned themselves out."[35]

But Asimov says fire does not fall from the sky.

Therefore, if this type of phenomena occurred in very recent times, then a catastrophe of the magnitude described by Velikovsky would have brought a great many small comets to the Earth which would in some regions, though not in all, have brought fire from the sky and created evidence of such immense heat as described by the great amounts of ash found at sites across the ancient Near East. In this respect, Stephen D. Peet describes an ancient stone fort or, more exactly, a stone wall located on a hilltop surrounded by fifteen to thirty foot cliffs. The wall is about four to five feet high and from twenty to thirty feet broad at its base. The stones are angular in shape and not fitted together on the basis of their shapes but were apparently piled one upon the other to build up the wall. But what is most outstanding regarding this hill fort, according to Peet, is the stone structure.

> " . . . [it] exhibit[s] the marks of intense heat, which has vitrified the surfaces of the stones and fused them together. Strong traces of fire are visible at other places on the wall, the point commanding the broadest extent of country. Here are two or three small mounds that seem burned through out. Nothing is more certain then that powerful fires have been maintained for considerable periods at numerous points on the hill."[36]

In effect, the heat applied to the outer wall of this hill fort was so great that it caused a glass-like material in the rock to melt and actually run down the wall cementing the stones together. The problem is to explain how such high temperatures could have been created by wood burning fires. As is well-known, fires of large wooden structures

[35]Waskin, *op. cit.*, pp. 143–144.

[36]Stephen D. Peet, "Defensive Works of the Mound Builders," *American Antiquarian*, Vol. 13, (1891), pp. 213–216.

are seldom hot enough to melt stones. But this fort in the Americas is not unique. Others have been found in Scotland, Ireland, Brittany, and Bohemia. According to Charles Fort:

> "The stones of these forts exist to this day, vitrified, or melted and turned to glass.
>
> "The archaelogists [sic] have jumped from one conclusion to another, like the 'rapid chamois' . . . to account for vitrified forts, always restricted by the commandment that unless their conclusions conformed to such tenets as Exclusionism of the System, [excluding materials falling from the sky] they would be excommunicated. So archaeologists, in their medieval dread of excommunication, have tried to explain vitrified forts in terms of terrestrial experience. We find in their insufficiencies the same old assimilating of all that could be assimilated, [earthly explanations] . . . into the explanation that vitrified forts were made by prehistoric peoples who built vast fires—often remote from wood supply to melt externally, and to cement together, the stones of their construction. But negativeness always: [to heavenly explanations] so within itself a science can never be homogeneous or unified or self harmonious. So, Miss Russel, in the *Journal of the B.A.A.*, [*Journal of the British Astronomical Association*] has pointed out that it is seldom that stones, to say nothing of long walls, of large houses that are burned to the ground are vitrified . . .
>
> "That the stones of these forts are vitrified in no reference to cementing them: that they are cemented here and there, in streaks, as if special blasts had struck, or played, upon them . . . .
>
> "Once upon a time something melted in streaks, the stones of forts on the tops of hills in Scotland, Ireland, Brittany and Bohemia . . . .
>
> "But some of the vitrified forts are not upon tops of hills: some are very inconspicuous: their walls too are vitrified in streaks.
>
> "Something once had effect, similar to lightning, upon forts, mostly on hills, in Scotland, Ireland, Brittany and Bohemia.
>
> "But upon hills, all over the rest of the world are remains of forts that are not vitrified."[37]

The explanation, I suggest, to account for these unique meltings in mostly high areas is that like, the Peshtigo, Chicago fires, comets on almost parallel paths, made up of similar materials, passed across these regions. In spite of the view that these meltings were induced by humans, the more honest archaeologists admitted:

> "The heat of the fire which produced such amazing effects, must have burned with the force of the strongest furnace; and from the general appearance of the cleft in the wall and these vitrified masses, I should be inclined . . . to attribute the catastrophe to lightning from heaven . . . ."[38]

[37]Charles Fort, *The Book of the Damned*, (Ace Book reprint), (New York, 1941), pp. 166–167.

[38]Anonymous, *Tower of Babel, American Journal of Science*, Vol. I, No. 37, (1839), pp. 352–353.