

Professor says current meteor shower proves theory of calendar's origin

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Stargazers are in for a unique treat tonight: the planet Earth will pass through the debris train of the Swift-Tuttle comet this evening which astronomers call the [Perseid meteor shower](#).

Dartmouth College geography professor emeritus and geographer Vincent H. Malmström had a theory in 1973 that the shooting stars an ancient Native American tribe saw in the sky thousands of years ago was a sign that something important was about to happen.

"The shooting stars that will be observed this evening are part of a recurring celestial phenomena that heralded the beginning of recorded time in America exactly 3,367 years ago tonight, on August 13, -1358 (1359 B.C.)," said Malmström.

In 1992, the Swift-Tuttle comet passed the Earth, a trip it makes once every 130 years. The Zoque, a Native American tribe in what is now southern Mexico, first noted it and initiated the earliest calendar in the Americas. The following day at noon, the sun passed directly overhead at their principal site, now known to archaeologists as Izapa, giving rise to a 260-day calendar that became the time-count subsequently adopted by most of the early peoples of Mesoamerica, including the Mayas and the Aztecs.

Malmström's book on the Mesoamerican [calendar](#), "Cycles of the Sun, Mysteries of the Moon", was published by the University of Texas Press in 1997 and in 2008, using NASA data, he demonstrated how the Mayan

people learned to predict [lunar eclipses](#). The latter paper can be found [on his website](#).

Provided by Dartmouth College

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