Chatham Blood Shower, 1884 [1]

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By A. Christopher Meekins, State Archives of North Carolina

"FALL OF BLOOD" IN CHATHAM COUNTY.

F. P. VENABLE.

A singular shower of some red liquid, supposed to be blood, which fell in Chatham on February 25th, 1884, was mentioned in some of the State papers, but little notice was taken of it. Nearly a week after the fall, Dr. Sidney Atwater brought a small specimen of sand seaked with this liquid to the University, to be examined. It was looked upon rather as a joke and no analysis was made for some time. When it was taken up several days afterwards there seemed to be sufficient interest attaching to it to warrant paying a visit to the locality where the matter fell. Meantime nearly three weeks had elapsed, and several heavy rains had fallen, so that when the place was reached (a small negro-cabin in New Hope township, about a quarter of a mile from the Raleigh and Pittsboro road) no vestiges of the matter could be found on the ground, and only one or two marks of drops on the fence. The woman who saw it fall was, however, examined and inquiries were made of the neighbors who visited the spot soon after. The fall came from a cloudless sky, when the wind was so slight as to be almost imperceptible.

Excerpt from "Fall of Blood' in Chatham County," by F. P. Venable, published in the *Journal of the Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society*, Vol. 1, p. 38-40, Chapel Hill, N.C. 1884.

[2]On February 25, 1884, Mrs. Kit

Lasater, "noted for truthfulness," was walking near her home in the New Hope township of <u>Chatham County</u> [3] when she heard what she thought was a hard rain fall. Glancing up she saw only clear sky but when she glanced down she saw what appeared to be the aftermath of a "shower of pure blood."

None of the liquid had fallen on her but it had drenched the ground and surrounding trees for some 60 feet (some accounts say yards) in circumference from the spot where she stood. Upon hearing her story, neighbors rushed to see for themselves and, when later interviewed, confirmed the story as related by Mrs. Lasater.

Samples were collected and sent to <u>Dr. F. P. Venable</u> [4], a professor at <u>UNC</u> [5], for evaluation. By mid-April he addressed the topic to the <u>Mitchell Scientific Society</u> [6]. In every test performed except one, the conclusion was the same. The samples appeared to be blood. Venable could offer no explanation beyond the results of the tests, suggesting that "the subject is quite a puzzle and offers a tempting field for the theorist blessed with a vivid imagination."

Similar cases of blood showers have been reported for centuries in various locations around the world.

References:

1

Venable, F. P. " 'Fall of Blood' in Chatham County." *Journal of the Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society*, Vol. 1: 38-40. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society, 1884. https://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/jncas/id/999 (accessed March 3, 2015).

The Charlotte Democrat (Charlotte, N.C.), April 18, 1884, p. 3.

The Chatham Record (Pittsboro, N.C.), April 24, 1884, p. 3.

The Wilson Advance (Wilson, N.C.), May 2, 1884, p. 1.

The Charlotte Democrat (Charlotte, N.C.), April 25, 1884, p. 2.

The Greensboro Patriot (Greensboro, N.C.), April 24, 1884, p. 2.

Weekly Raleigh Register (Raleigh, N.C.), April 23, 1884, p. 2.

Image Credit:

Venable, F. P. " 'Fall of Blood' in Chatham County." *Journal of the Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society*, Vol. 1: 38-40. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society, 1884. https://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/jncas/id/999 [2] (accessed March 3, 2015).

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