

**A Darkness At Midday**

**Nature's Non-Violent Demonstration**

By W.S. Russ, Jr.

Except to astronomers, young lovers and some of those more poetically inclined individuals, the unlikely alliance of star gazing and social gambits might seem to pose an odd pair of bedfellows. Yet, with next week's strange skyward spectacle in store for our area, lots of other unusual turns will be in prospect.

The particular star to be involved is our own sun, whose light will be stolen by the moon, momentarily plunging the brightness of early afternoon into an eerie twilight pall. The social element arises from the throngs of outlying spectators who will flock into the local 85-mile-wide swath which finds Chadbourne within six miles of its center. So, why not make the first move and invite friends in for an "E-Day" weekend and share with them a sight that most persons never witness in a lifetime?

Coming as it does during "prime viewing time" on Saturday and with the sun standing 48 degrees high in the sky, the total solar eclipse of March 7 offers an unique opportunity to renew old acquaintances and, perhaps, to gain some new ones.

As infrequently as they happen over a given spot—only about once in 400 years—total eclipses aren't really too rare when considered globally. Some seventy of them typically occur somewhere over the earth during a century. But their effect is largely lost to sight over vast ocean waters, through polar wastes or in sparsely inhabited or inaccessible regions.

Voluminous commentaries and thousands of photographs and artists' renditions have sought to describe the matchless splendor of a total solar eclipse. But to any perceptive observer of such events in the past, no such

description can fully convey the awesomeness of the event itself when seen in a clear sky.

The local circumstance is but a brief scene in a long play which begins with a sunrise splashdown in the equatorial Pacific as the moon's umbra—its dark central shadow—first intercepts the earth's surface southeast of the Christmas Atoll and speeds eastward over the ocean. After pouring its darkness landward over Mexico's Isthmus of Tehuantepec, it goes Gulfward and first abuts the U.S. mainland in the eastward reaches of Florida's Panhandle. Racing northeastward, the shadow crosses the Georgia-Carolinas' coastal plains and heads out to sea just south of Hampton Roads.

Skirting the New England coastline and directly affecting Nantucket Island, the phenomenon passes over the eastern Maritime Provinces and finally dies at sea in a North Atlantic sunset south of Iceland.

Locally, the band of totality will embrace all of the five-county area of Columbus, Bladen, Robeson, Marion and Horry. But to observe the eclipse for its maximum duration of two minutes, fifty-eight seconds, viewers should station themselves along the central path which enters the state just south of Fair Bluff, grazes Cerro Gordo to the west, passes Evergreen a couple of miles eastward and goes almost directly over Abbottsburg and Elizabeth town. The 2000-mile-an-hour shadow will rush into North Carolina within a half minute past 1:28 p.m.

As a partial eclipse, the event will be witnessed to some degree over all of North America except the central and western regions of Alaska. More than an hour and a quarter before "second

contact" (the beginning of totality), the moon may be seen to impinge on the southwest limb of the solar disc and gradually encroach over the sun's surface.

"CAUTION: Partial-Eclipse Viewing May Be Hazardous to Your Eyesight." Only expensive professional optical devices can assure safe direct observing of the partial phases. Looking at this part of the event through smoked or colored glass, densely exposed photographic negatives or other crude implements can cause permanent visual impairment—even total blindness. The simplest and safest method is to punch a clean nailhole through a piece of thin cardboard and allow the sun to focus its own diminishing image on a light surface beneath. The total eclipse itself may be viewed without danger.

Actually, Nature provides her own focusing mechanism for persons who are near whatever leafy evergreen foliage is available. Fuzzy little crescent

images may be seen forming over the ground and against tree trunks and building structures as the fading sunlight streams through interstitial openings between the leaves.

All that is strange about a developing solar eclipse is not confined to the heavens. Odd things begin to happen in the land too: flowering shrubs enfold their blossoms as the sky darkens and the temperature drops after the one o'clock hour; birds dart about, chirping nervously and seek their nest; bats, night-flying insects and other nocturnal creatures stream from their dens; dogs cower and bark; livestock head toward shelter; domestic fowl run to roost. Indeed, it seems that all living thing sense an apparent fouling of the diurnal clockwork. Even man himself stands in hushed astonishment at the incredible drama that is about to unfold—something that sent his ancient forebears fleeing in terror.

The kind of semi-darkness that invades the landscape is quite

unlike that of the usual golden-hued sunset. Instead, a deepening ashen pallor envelopes the scene; and in the last few minutes before totality weird undulating patterns of light shudder through the atmosphere. These "shadow bands" are indistinctly cast against any large light-colored surface.

If the atmosphere is quite clear, observers with an open vantage toward the southwest may see the shadow itself approaching at unbelievable speed and appearing as a diffuse towering cloud of locusts. In the same instant the few dying rays of sunlight streak through the northeastern crags of the moon's dark face to form "Baily's bead." In a second or two they are gone, and the fully glory of the total eclipse appears.

The sun stands in mid-heaven, yet its face is completely obscured by the stark blackness of a new moon. Instead, there is seen the tenuous, pearly-white plasma of the solar corona, extending out into the sky in

irregular directions. Through binoculars there may be detected flickering scarlet prominences delicately piercing the corona.

Of the six planets which are ever normally visible to the unaided eye, portions of five will be favorably placed for observation during the "blackout." Tiny Mercury will be in the vanguard, lying just southwest of the sun. Flanking the eclipse somewhat closer on the opposite side will be our to the northeast, Mars and Saturn will bring up the rear elements in that order and in close array. Jupiter won't make the scene this time. The giant planet, together with his dozen moons, will have retired in the west long before the eclipse begins.

It's that remaining object which is in many ways the most peculiar one of the lot. As is always the case with land-bound man, only in times quite recent that large expanses of its surface have been directly seen. But as

**RED & WHITE**

LONG BEACH SHOPPING CENTER  
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

U. S. Choice **SHOULDER ROAST** LB. **75¢**

U. S. Choice **LEAN GROUND BEEF** LB. **49¢**

ONE QUARTER - SLICED INTO CHOPS **PORK LOIN** LB. **69¢**

Center Cut **PORK CHOPS** LB. **89¢**

Loin End **PORK ROAST** LB. **79¢**

Market Style **BACK BONE** LB. **79¢**

Red & White Pure Pork **SAUSAGE** LB. **55¢**

Hormel Canned **HAMS** 3 LB. Can **\$3.49**

Center Cut **Chuck Roast** LB. **69¢**

Southern Biscuit **FLOUR** 5 LB. Bag **57¢**

Orange - Grape - Punch **TROPI-CAL-LO** 64 Ozs. **39¢**

RED & WHITE **SALTINES** 11 LB. Box **23¢**

Red & White **TOMATO SOUP** 4 116 Oz. Cans **49¢**

RED & WHITE **DOG FOOD** 12 Cans **97¢**

Red & White **MAYONNAISE** Quart **49¢**

Pride Of The Farm **CRISCO** 3 LB. Can **59¢** Limit 1 Can With \$10.00 Order

**GOLDEN CREAM CORN** 4 303 Cans **49¢**

Red & White Frozen **ORANGE JUICE** 12 Oz. Can **29¢**

NESCAFÉ INSTANT **COFFEE** 10 Oz. Jar **\$1.59**

Red & White Fancy **FRUIT COCKTAIL** 4 303 Cans **87¢**

Red & White **APPLE PEACH CHERRY PIES** 3 - 20 Oz. PIES **89¢**

Mazola Corn Oil **Margarine** 1 LB. **39¢**

Kraft Sliced American Deluxe **CHEESE** 6 Oz. PKG. **39¢**

**VICKS** FORMULA 44 COUGH SYRUP 3 1/4 Oz. SIZE **89¢**

Fresh Red or Blue **GRAPES** LB. **19¢**

**CABBAGE** LB. **10¢**

**TOMATOES** LB. **29¢**

**POTATOES** 10 LB. Bag **39¢** With \$5.00 Order

**RUTABAGAS** LB. **10¢**

**GRADE "A" EGGS** DOZ. **59¢** LARGE

**PLANNING TO Build or Remodel?**

We Invite You To Visit Our Jobs And Inspect Our Work.

**WE SPECIALIZE IN CUSTOM BUILDING! FREE ESTIMATES**

OFFICE LOCATED NEXT DOOR TO RUSS FORD

**Robert D. Smith, Gen. Contr.**

SHALLOTTE, N. C.  
Office Phone: 754-4812  
Home Phone: 287-3347

**NOW THAT THE NEW BRIDGE IS OPEN ITS EASY TO GET TO HALL'S DRUG Store**

When coming to Wilmington turn left at 5th and Dawson.

We have always enjoyed doing business with our Brunswick County friends... and hope to do more.

You'll enjoy the friendly folks at HALL'S.

**HALL'S DRUG STORE**  
5th & Castle Streets WILMINGTON, N. C.

**CITY TAGS**

City tags Expire On 15 February  
The 1970 Tags Are On Sale At City Hall, Persons Found Operating Vehicles After That Date Without Valid City Tags Are Subject To A Penalty Or Fine.

**Police Department City Of Southport**

**VOLKSWAGEN REPAIRS**

**ALL FOREIGN CARS LOW PRICES**

**SOUTHPORT TEXACO**

457-6514 — Southport, N. C.  
**DON SHELBY MECHANIC**

**pretty as a picture and Easy Monthly Terms**

**Yes, your kitchen can be beautiful as well as practical**

With the help of our kitchen planning people, your kitchen can be a conversation piece, embodying all the useful, practical features that make meal preparation a real pleasure. Just give us a ring on the phone. We'll do the rest.

- Trained Kitchen Engineer
- FREE ESTIMATES
- Wall - Tex Wall Coverings
- Complete Interior Design Service.

**BLAKE BUILDERS SUPPLY**  
457-4351 — SOUTHPORT, N. C.

**New Camaro. Feb. 26th.**

**We've never announced a car at this time before. But then nobody's ever announced a car like this before.**

**Super Hugger**

If it were an ordinary sportster, we'd have introduced it at the ordinary time. Instead, we took the time to build a whole new Camaro.

We started with a sleek new shape and a low road-hugging stance.

And added more hood. A faster fastback. Wider doors. And new deeply contoured bucket seats.

The instrument panel wraps around you. With enough dials to make you think you're piloting a 747. There are four transmissions. And six power plants up to the Turbo-Jet 396 V8 that you can order.

Pick the one that best suits your driving. Then go pick on an open road.

And make it one with plenty of twisting turns. Because Camaro has a remarkable new suspension. And standard front disc brakes for a leech-like grip on the road.

New Camaro. The Super Hugger. Other sportsters always feared it might come to this.

And they were right. Only their timing was wrong.

Putting your first, keeps us first.

**CHEVROLET**

See it. At your Chevrolet Sports Dept.

**GM**  
Camaro Sport Coupe with RS equipment.