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No "Wet" Or "Dry" Moons

"Wet" and "dry" moons exist only in our imagination, says Dr. W. J. Humphreys, meteorological physicist of the U. S. Weather Bureau in an illustrated feature article prepared for newspapers by Science Service (Washington). We are all familiar, he says, with the assertion that as soon as the moon changes the weather will get better. Whatever we want in the way of weather, we shall get, we are told, when the moon changes—a theory, a hopeful expectation inherited from granddad's granddad, so comforting that it were a pity to destroy it, if we had nothing better to offer in its stead. But really the moon does not control the weather, and there are much better guides to follow than the tradition that it does. He goes on:

"How do you know, the faithful ask, and have a right to ask, that the moon does not influence the weather? It is certain that the great tides of the ocean are caused mainly by the moon; and even the continents, mountains and all, are raised and lowered, twice a day, nearly a foot by its pull. Surely, then, the tides of the light, mobile atmosphere must be so large as to produce great changes in the weather.

"All this appears reasonable, we must admit; but it happens that the atmosphere does not behave that way, and so far from it, indeed, that its tides can be detected only by the most searching and delicate means. We must give up the idea, then, that the moon pulls the atmosphere about in great ebbs and flows, and thereby affects the weather, because, on careful examination, we find that nothing of the kind happens.

But how about the heat from the moon? Isn't that greater at full moon than at new moon, and enough greater to change the weather? Yes, it is greatest at full moon, but even then, as shown by direct measurement, it is so small that it can alter the temperature of the earth by only one or two thousandths of a degree.

"In quite a different and indirect manner however, the moon changes the temperature of the earth manifold as much as by its own conspicuous radiation. It does so in this way: since both it and the earth swing around the sun together, and at the same time rotate about each other like a big weight and little weight at the two ends of a stick hurtling end over end through the air, it follows that at full moon, when the moon is on the opposite side of the earth from the sun, the earth itself is closest to the sun, and at new moon farthest away. At full moon the earth is about 6,000 miles nearer the sun than it is at new moon.

"This seems a long way when thought of in terms of traveling over the face of the earth, but it is a mighty little part of our 90-odd million miles from the sun, and the temperature effect is only about one fiftieth of a degree.

"Perhaps, now, our moon champion will offer another and very pretty bit of evidence. Why, he says, many a time I have seen the moon just eating up the clouds. The sky was nearly covered with clouds at sundown, and then in less than an hour the moon was shining bright and there scarcely was a cloud to be seen.

"We agree that often a sky that is considerably clouded at and before sunset is seen, during the light of the moon, to clear off rapidly as the twilight deepens. But we do not admit that the moon had anything to do with it. This is how it all comes about: when the sun goes down, clouds cool faster than the dry air. They lose heat and also chill the air they are in. This chilled contracts, as cooled things do, becomes correspondingly denser, and sinks to lower levels, pulling the cloud particles along with it. As it sinks it gets warmer and warmer, and stops sinking and warming only when it comes to the same temperature as the air that then surrounds

it. No, as the sinking air gets warmer, of course the cloud droplets in it evaporate and the cloud disappears. The whole process happens just as well when the moon is below the horizon as when above, but we don't see so clearly the vanishing of the clouds on a dark night as on a bright one.

"The moon then does not make big tides in the air; it does not in any way appreciably affect the temperature of the atmosphere; and altho it seems to dissipate clouds, it does nothing of the kind. We are sure, therefore, after all this, that the moon does not noticeably control the weather. But our moon friend is absolutely certain that when the moon changes the weather changes, and that it seldom changes without a change of the moon. In both these cases he is absolutely right, not because the moon changes the weather, but because as both are always changing they have to change together. There are only about twenty-eight days from new moon to new moon, and in that time the moon shows four changes—first quarter, full moon, third quarter, and new moon; one change every seven days. These changes are not abrupt, but each is spread over at least two or three days.

"Those who forecast the weather in this manner generally give it a leeway of a few days in which to make good. Our friend really is playing the game of 'heads I win, tails you lose'; for as all the time is used, it would be impossible to find any date on which a change of the weather could occur without being close to some change or other of the moon.

"But what about dry moons and wet moons, that tell us what sort of weather we are going to have for nearly a whole month? When both horns of the new moon point up it can hold lots of water without spilling, and therefore brings

enough to furnish a dozen rains or more. On the other hand, when the new moon stands on end, or nearly so, it is a dry moon. It can hold but little water, and of course for the next three or four weeks there will be very few rains, and even these will be light. Yes; we tell him, we heard all that long ago, and we also heard forecasts and explanations just the reverse. That is, we heard some people say that when both horns of the new moon point up there will be rain; and heard others say, just as positively, that the month would be dry, because when both horns are turned up, very little water can spill out. In short, while the moon weather prophets all agree that there is a wet moon and a dry moon, they differ completely as to which is which!

Each is wholly wrong, but their average is exactly right, for there is no wet moon and no dry horns is the same everywhere along any parallel of latitude, wet spells and dry spells would not be scattered irregularly over the earth as they actually are, but would form continuous belts around the world.

which certainly they do not. Furthermore, careful studies of the records kept at hundreds of weather stations all over the earth show that neither the pointing of the new moon's horns, nor any of the moon's changes, has the slightest relation to warm weather or cold, wet or dry, fair or foul.

"The moon is a wonderful thing in song and story, in love and war, sentiment and science, but for all that it never did, and it never will, have anything to do with causing or changing the weather."

Farmers in the mountain section of North Carolina have purchased 123 pure bred cows since the first of the year.

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Last Call! HISTORY ESSAY CONTEST EXTENDED TO APRIL 1st.

THE APRIL THIRTEENTH ISSUE OF THE DANBURY REPORTER WILL BE A SPECIAL FIFTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY NUMBER OF NOT LESS THAN TWENTY-FOUR PAGES, SPECIALLY ILLUSTRATED, GIVING THE MOST COMPLETE HISTORY OF STOKES COUNTY AVAILABLE.

CASH PRIZES TO BE AWARDED.

FIRST PRIZE—For the best and most complete outline of the history of Stokes county, giving a description of the first settlement and development of the county the sum of ten dollars will be paid on publication of the manuscript. Any citizen of the county may enter this contest. All other manuscripts published will be paid for at the rate of \$1.50 per column.

SECOND PRIZE—For the best history of a township in Stokes county, giving an outline of the settlement and development of the township, will be awarded the sum of five dollars. One manuscript will be published from each township and will be paid for at the rate of \$1.50 per column on publication.

THIRD PRIZE—For the oldest, denragutype, tintype or photograph of a citizen of Stokes county giving a biographical sketch of the subject, a prize of five dollars in cash will be awarded. All photos returned in good shape.

CONTESTS CLOSE ON APRIL 1, 1927. Mail all manuscripts and photos to the DANBURY REPORTER, DANBURY, N. C.

The Publishers desire to make this the largest, finest and most valuable issue of the Danbury Reporter ever published, an issue of historic interest, a souvenir that people will send to their friends, a review of the history and prospects of Stokes county which will be of great commercial and advertising value, and, with this idea in view thousands of additional copies will be printed and distributed.

Following is a general outline of the proposed contents of this special edition.

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS OF Fifty-Fifth Anniversary Edition —of— THE DANBURY REPORTER

1. History of Stokes county—Prize essay and others.
2. Topography of Stokes County—
 - (a) First map and settlements.
 - (b) Present map and developments.
 - (c) Series of photos of interesting places.
3. History of agricultural and industrial development of the county.
4. Resources, a review and forecasts—
 - (a) Agricultural.
 - (b) Timber.
 - (c) Minerals.
 - (d) Recreational.
 - (e) Manufacturing.
5. Commercial institutions, advertisements giving history.
6. Education development and institutions.
7. WHO'S WHO IN STOKES COUNTY, photos and biographical sketches of prominent citizens